

Domestic Peacekeeping Practices in the Tamale Metropolis of Ghana

Mustapha Abdallah and Kwesi Aning

Abstract

This article contributes to understanding local security practices in urban Africa by examining links between international peacekeeping and local policing in Tamale, the capital of Ghana's Northern Region. It uses the concept of assemblage to suggest that while experiences, skills and lessons gained from consistent engagement in United Nations peacekeeping may be detected in local policing in Tamale, their effects on everyday policing are in practice limited. This is due to the central role of traditional authorities in local security and general political interference in police matters. Local policing in Tamale is an assemblage of formal (police and military) and informal (chiefs and community leaders) security arrangements, with the latter, especially, dictating how crimes should be dealt with. This makes it next to impossible for the police to do their job without interference. The article examines how non-state or traditional actors shape policing and security provision in Tamale, and what space is available for police officers to use the skills they believe they have learned in peacekeeping missions. The paper shows through empirical analysis how local policing is shaped more by kinship and politics than international principles of human rights and democracy.

Keywords: peacekeeping, policing, security provision, assemblages, Tamale metropolis

Résumé

Cet article contribue à la compréhension des pratiques de sécurité locales en Afrique urbaine en examinant les liens entre le maintien de la paix sur le plan international et la police locale à Tamale, la capitale de la région Nord du Ghana. Il utilise le concept d'assemblage pour suggérer que si les expériences, les compétences et les leçons acquises grâce à un engagement constant dans le maintien de la paix des Nations Unies peuvent être détectées dans la police locale de Tamale, leurs effets sur la police quotidienne sont en pratique limités. Cela est dû au rôle central des autorités traditionnelles dans la sécurité locale et à l'interférence politique générale dans les affaires de police. La police locale de Tamale est un assemblage de dispositifs de sécurité formels (police et armée) et informels (chefs et leaders communautaires), ces derniers, en particulier, dictant la manière dont les crimes doivent être traités. Ainsi, il est pratiquement impossible pour la police de faire son travail sans interférence. L'article examine comment les acteurs non étatiques ou traditionnels façonnent le maintien de l'ordre et

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l'assurance de sécurité à Tamale, et quel espace est disponible pour la mise en pratique des compétences acquises par les officiers de police lors des missions de maintien de la paix. L'article montre, par le biais d'une analyse empirique, dans quelle mesure la police locale est davantage façonnée par la parenté et la politique que par les principes internationaux des droits de l'homme et de la démocratie.

Mots-clés: maintien de la paix, maintien de l'ordre, assurance de sécurité, assemblages, Métropole de Tamale.

Introduction¹

Policing in Ghana is the formal responsibility of the Ghana Police Service (GPS), mandated to prevent and detect crime, apprehend offenders, maintain public order and the safety of persons and property” (Police Service Act, 1970, Act 350). Since state-sanctioned policing was instituted in 1831 (Teku, 1984; Aning, 2006), law enforcement in Ghana has been complemented by other security agencies such as the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) to address violent crimes, including armed robberies, threats of terrorism and political ‘vigilantism’ during elections (Christensen, 2022; Aubyn & Abdallah, 2013; Christensen & Edu-Afful, 2019:4; Edu-Afful & Allotey-Pappoe Policing in Ghana is the formal responsibility of the Ghana Police Service (GPS), mandated to “prevent and, 2016; Tankebe, 2009; Gyampoh et al, 2017). At the same time, a range of actors beyond the state also perform central roles in providing local security, including private security companies, traditional leaders and community policing groups (Badong, 2008; Sowatey & Atuguba, 2015; Brenya & Warden, 2014; Aning et al, 2018).

In Tamale² in northern Ghana, the empirical focus of this study, operations involving the military and police have become a central feature of law enforcement. They are informed not only by evolving internal security challenges and local policing practices, but also by long-term experiences from international peacekeeping in countries such as East Timor, Lebanon, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Liberia (Aning & Aubyn, 2013; Kotia, 2015; Aubyn et al, 2019). Domestically, while police-military partnerships are seen as supporting a police service under pressure, some view the increasing involvement of the GAF in internal security as an encroachment on the police’s constitutional role (1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana). This can be attributed to the politicisation of the GPS (Aning, 2015:26; Atuguba, 2007:5; Ayee, 2019) by the two main political parties, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC), which in turn has weakened the GPS, and maintained a space for non-state actors to enforce security at the local level (Aning et al, 2018; Aning & Aubyn, 2018; Annan, 2013).

To understand local level security dynamics in Tamale and how practices and experiences of peacekeeping abroad play into them, we use the notion of assemblage to capture the interconnectedness of ideas, resources and experiences across space (DeLanda, 2016; Abrahamsen & Williams, 2017; see also Albrecht, 2022a). On the one hand, the concept helps to illuminate linkages between international peacekeeping experiences and how they translate into everyday local policing as well as joint military-police internal operations. On the other hand, it shows how different security actors or providers, formal and informal, are brought together – that is, assemble – in contingent wholes to establish particular forms of securitised order.

The article is divided into five sections. First, we explore the assemblage concept, and how it can be applied as a lens to understand everyday policing in Ghana, and how it connects to international peacekeeping. Section two examines how international peacekeeping experiences and practices have translated into local policing in Ghana. We explore different perspectives of international and domestic peacekeeping experiences

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² In this paper ‘Tamale’ refers to the Tamale Metropolis, which is broadly defined to include Tamale city and its neighbouring towns and villages. The Ghana Statistical Service reports: “The population of Tamale Metropolis, according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, is 233,252 representing 9.4 percent of the region’s population. Males constitute 49.7 percent and females represent 50.3 percent. The proportion of the population living in urban localities (80.8%) is higher than that living in rural localities (19.1%) of the metropolis. The metropolis has a sex ratio of 99.1. The population of the metropolis is youthful (almost 36.4% of the population is below 15 years) depicting a broad base population pyramid which tapers off with a small number of elderly persons (60 years and older) representing 5.1 percent. The total age dependency ratio for the district is 69.4, the age dependency ratio for rural localities is higher (86.5) than that of urban localities (65.7)” (GSS, 2014).

based on fieldwork we carried out in Tamale and Accra between 2019 and 2022. Third, the paper discusses two things: first, how peacekeeping experiences of police officers manifest locally in Tamale; and second, how police experiences converge with that of the military in internal operations. In the fourth section, we discuss how the police's peacekeeping experiences relating to community engagement and community policing are merged with traditional practices of enforcing security. Stated differently, how do the police, with their peacekeeping experiences, influence traditional order-making? We consider issues of witchcraft accusations and kinship relations because, while often overlooked in analyses of policing, they pose significant operational challenges to collaborations between the GPS and traditional authorities. The paper's concluding section provides some thoughts on how broadening the notion of kinship and developing a formalised framework could contribute to enhanced relations between the GPS and traditional authority actors.

In terms of methodology, the article draws on qualitative research approaches, using a combination of face-to-face, in-depth interviews, phone interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted by the authors in Tamale and Accra between 2019 and 2022. Respondents were purposively selected for their knowledge, experiences and involvement in both UN and domestic security operations. In Accra, we conducted interviews with both senior and junior police and military officers, security experts, peacekeeping practitioners and civil society actors. In Tamale, we expanded the group of interviewees to include chiefs and community leaders in four of the seven sub-paramountcies, namely: Gulpkegu, Bamvim, Choggu and Lamashegu. Outside the core Tamale paramountcies, an interview was also conducted with the chief of Sagnarigu. These interviews elicited varied responses on how police officers are perceived by traditional actors and vice-versa, and what challenges arise from their partnerships. They also show how police officers integrate their peacekeeping experiences into their work while establishing partnerships with the traditional orders.

Conceptualising assemblage/assemblages

The origin of assemblage as an analytical concept can be traced to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987, first published in 1980), and was further developed by DeLanda (2006) and other scholars, including Ong and Collier (2005), Sassen (2006, 2008), and Abrahamsen and Williams (2009, 2011). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue that entities are never static, pre-determined or forever stable in their ontological form or location. The concept emphasises the ever-mutating nature of entities and the need for all to come together in a dependent whole to achieve maximum effect.

According to DeLanda, an assemblage is conceptualised as “a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures” (2016:1). He contends that the concept emerged as a reaction to the theory of organic totalities. While organic totalities are characterised by the dependent relationship between component parts of an entity, assemblages are defined by being heterogeneous and by shifting relationships between the component parts. These relationships, according to DeLanda, imply “that a component part of an assemblage may be detached from it and plugged into a different assemblage in which its interactions are different” (2006:10). Thus, the notion of assemblage is characterised by being in a constant process of change. According to Ong and Collier (2005:12), assemblages can be simultaneously de-territorialised and re-territorialised. In other words, established ideas, different forms of power, resources, cultural practices and experiences can be replaced and displaced in a given locality. Thinking with assemblage challenges the idea of fixed and stable ontologies; what is international is not discrete from what is national or local and vice versa. As such, as Ong suggests in his conversation with Sassen, *global* assemblages capture “how global elements interact with situated practices beliefs and politics” (Sassen & Ong, 2014:21). The concept is an analytic tactic that deals with the abstract and unseen; how ideas and knowledge circulate and transform socio-economic, political and cultural environments (ibid:18).

Sassen (2006, 2008) and Abrahamsen and Williams (2009) do not – unlike DeLanda and Ong and Collier see the assemblage as a theoretical concept, but instead consider the term to be a ‘loose metaphor’ that captures hybridity and explains processes of assembling and dis-assembling (Bueger, 2014). While Sassen employs it to examine hybrid formations of territory, authority and rights, Abrahamsen and Williams (2009, 2011) discuss hybridity of the state in relation to the privatisation of violence, that is, private security companies. Abrahamsen and Williams' (2009; 2011) notion of global security assemblages captures a growing privatisation of security in developing countries. Rather than constituting the erosion of state power, they see privatisation of security as the re-articulation of growing public-private partnerships on the one hand, and global-local connections on the other. As such, global security assemblages are “transnational structures and networks in

which a wide range of different actors and normativities interact, cooperate and compete to produce new institutions, practices and forms of deterritorialised security” (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011:90).

Captured by this definition is a notion of diversity of practices and logics relating to how private, public, community and non-state actors assemble to provide security. Private or non-state actors are not necessarily framed to oppose state authority, although at times and under certain conditions they do in Ghana and elsewhere. Rather, within the framework of assemblages, emphasis is placed on the diversity of actors, the different forms of authority and resources available to them, and the manner in which they “come together to function as systems or contingent wholes” (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2017:17) to exercise effects in defined locations.

In this article, our application of assemblage to understand policing in Tamale, and the implications of international peacekeeping in this regard, is not done to engage in further theoretical development, but to capture linkages between international peacekeeping and local security practices by the police, traditional leaders and other actors. This means that the concept relates to two contexts that ordinarily are treated as separate domains: the international and local. The international context relates specifically to how peacekeeping experiences, practices, forms of knowledge and skills acquired by police especially, but also military officers, are translated into everyday – local – policing in Ghana.

Translating peacekeeping experiences and practices into local policing in Ghana

The general perception of the GPS among Ghanaians is that it has not departed significantly from the colonial era, where its main purpose was to protect its pay masters, that is, the political elites. The police were handmaidens of colonial administrators and used *buga-buga*³ methods (Appiagyei-Atua, 2006) to intimidate suspects by applying the policies, practices and behaviours of the colonial policing system (Tankebe, 2013; Boateng & Darko, 2016). The post-independent period was also characterised by an established “patrimonial relationship between the police and successive governments and political elites” (Tankebe, 2013:539).

Although this perception of the police persists, engagement in international peacekeeping operations over the years has had a transformative effect on Ghanaian police and military officers. Through training programs – domestic police training, pre-deployment training, induction training and on-going mission training (see Aubyn et al, 2015) – as well as every day in-theatre experience, the police have gained novel insights into policing methods relating to issues of human rights, rule of law, crowd control measures, crime scene management, investigations and the promotion of gender equality (Beek, 2016; Bellamy and Williams, 2013; Aning & Aubyn, 2013). These insights have been significant in shaping the world view of Ghanaian police officers as they perform their roles and responsibilities. According to Aubyn et al (2019), “*The consistent long-term exposure to human rights standards that peacekeeping personnel go through during their pre-deployment and in-mission training programs, as well as their everyday mission work, has played an important transformational role in this regard.*” In particular, the police have witnessed transformations “in the areas of community policing, the use of information and communication technology and the establishment of new bodies such as the Formed Police Unit (FPU) to deal with specialised law enforcement matters (operations)” (ibid).

As a result of training on how to deal with public order and threats to the peace, static security of key infrastructure, criminal information gathering, counterterrorism and counter insurgency operations, the FPU is able to respond to situations beyond the capacity of traditional police officers. Closely linked to the FPU is the Counter-Terrorism Directorate (CTD), established by the GPS and partly informed by Ghana’s experiences with internal terrorist threats, developments within peacekeeping theatres and evolving threats of terrorism in West Africa (for more on counterterrorism in Ghana, see Christensen, 2022).

Such units/departments assemble and transfer new knowledge, ideas, best practices and skills and, in doing so, transform local policing. One example is community policing that “is a means of forging synergetic relations with local communities to tap the contribution of the people while at the same time maintaining peace and security in the society” (Brenya & Warden, 2014: 245; see also Sowatey & Atuguba, 2015; Albrecht, 2022b). Also described as “policing by consent” by a police officer in Ghana (Interview, senior police officer, Accra, June 2020), community policing has gained currency with the establishment of the Community Policing Unit (CPU) by the GPS in June 2002. The CPU, while aiming to address citizens’ vigilantism characterised by lynching and abuse of the rights of suspected criminals (Boye-Doe, 2007 cited in Brenya & Warden, 2014), is

³ The term *buga-buga*, which literally means ‘beat-beat’ in Hausa, refers to the paramilitary tactics used by the Hausa Constabulary to intimidate the indigenous people while giving protection to the colonial authorities in Ghana.

also influenced by community policing experiences in UN peacekeeping theatres (Interview, senior police officer, Accra, June 2020). Formally, the unit has been transformative in how the GPS relates with communities, stakeholders, chiefs and opinion leaders in dealing with crime.

Community police officers perform several functions, such as quickly responding to emergencies, gathering intelligence from their peers on the ground, and interacting and assisting people in need (Sowatey & Atuguba, 2015). These functions “have established closer ties and [a] support base between police officers and local groups, improved the quality of intelligence received from the communities, and increased local awareness of crime” (Brenya & Warden, 2014:246). Overall, community policing in Ghana is intended to win hearts and minds; a concept borrowed from UN peacekeeping missions to manage crime through consent, intelligence gathering and information sharing (Interview, senior police officer, Accra, June 2020).

However, for serious policing issues such as armed robberies and threats of terrorism, that are beyond the scope of community policing, the GPS relies on support from the GAF. In northern Ghana, for example, joint police–military patrols have been established. These internal operations or ‘domestic peacekeeping’ are concerned with the deployment of police and other security agencies to maintain law and order (for more on internal operations, see Edu–Afful, 2022; Alhassan & Asante, 2022). Beginning with Operation Gong–Gong in 2001 by the Kufuor administration to restore peace and stability after the 1994–1995 northern conflict between Konkomba and Nanumba (Wienia, 2009; Pul, 2003; GhanaWeb, 2001), several other such operations have been deployed in specific parts of the country. These include Operation Calm Life (to address crime such as armed robbery in urban centres), Operation Vanguard (to combat illegal mining), Operation Halt (to end illegal exploitation of timber), and Operation Conquered Fist to prevent the imminent threat of terrorism, especially in the northern part of the country (Christensen & Edu–Afful, 2019; Albrecht et al, 2021).

Several factors account for these joint police–military operations, including limited authority, legitimacy and trustworthiness of the GPS in the eyes of the Ghanaian public. According to Albrecht et al (2021), police mistrust can be explained by four factors: the militarised policing practices during the colonial era, which continue to this day; the underfunding of the GPS and its effects on access to equipment, logistics and means of transport; partisanship of the GPS, which largely favours the government in power; and the perception of the GPS as neo–patrimonial institution, characterised by corruption. These challenges have informed the need to assemble the experiences of the GAF, which is “seen as more neutral, better equipped and trained, but also more robust and aggressive” (Albrecht et al, 2021:3). As a result of these characteristics of the GAF, “politicians who want to appear resolute, tough on crime, and responsive to security challenges across Ghana prefer [to deploy the police together with the military or] to deploy the military over police officers” (ibid; also Interview, security analyst, Accra, Dec 2021). Specific to Tamale and other parts of Northern Region, a military officer explained that:

Sometimes we are called to join the police by metropolitan, municipal and district chief executives (MMDECs) because the police is overwhelmed, but also due to the fact the military has unique posturing – with armoured cars that instil fear in the criminally–minded civilians. (Interview, military officer, Accra, Dec 2021)

A senior police officer who had participated in joint internal operation in Tamale corroborates this viewpoint, and further explained:

We make requests from the politicians for the military to join us due to the volatile nature of conflicts in the northern regions, where the police lack the necessary force and logistics to confront violent conflicts that recur, for example, between the Abudu and Andani Royal Gates and other paramountcies in the region. (Interview, police officer, Accra, Dec 2021)

The GAF’s support of the GPS stems not only from experiences from within Ghana’s borders relating to conflict and crime dynamics, but also practices abroad in international peacekeeping. As noted by Agordzo (2009), the ‘security gap’ often created by delayed deployment of the UN police has led to the military taking on *de facto* responsibilities as police officers in arresting, detaining and sometimes training local law enforcers. The discharge of these duties in peacekeeping exposes military personnel to basic functions of the police and contributes to enhancing their knowledge on policing, especially as they end up playing collaborative policing roles at home.

Unlike community policing, military involvement in responding to crimes at home has at times led to human rights violations (Crawford & Anyidoho, 2013). Community members in Tamale, for instance, explained that while internal operations engaging the military can serve as conflict management tools that de–escalates violence and suppresses crimes, the majority of civilians describe such missions as “negative” or “intrusive” interventions (FGD, July 2019, Tamale). Indeed, a senior police officer, who had been on peacekeeping, concurred with this viewpoint, arguing that during joint military–police operations, security and law enforcement

personnel routinely manhandle, instil fear in and intimidate innocent citizens (Interview, senior police officer, Tamale, July 2019). These trends are partly attributable to frustrations arising from poor salaries, delayed payment of allowances, poor logistical support (eg transport), insufficient food and intrusive political interference in operational decision-making (ibid; see also GhanaWeb, 2001). Consequently, internal operations are viewed by some police personnel as a “punishment” rather than a call to “national duty,” unlike international peacekeeping, which on the contrary is seen as an opportunity to make money and progress professionally (Interview, police officer, Tamale, Aug 2019).

In effect, different policy structures, monitoring mechanisms and sanctions regime abroad and at home may account for how police officers conceptualise peacekeeping and apply them in actual practice (see Aubyn, 2022). A police respondent shared his experience:

While serving in Kosovo and Congo DRC, I was influenced and inspired by various laws [international human rights and humanitarian laws, UN sanctions regime and remuneration structure] to perform my duties efficiently. In Ghana, internal policing structure is a challenge, local structure is a challenge, and above all the political structure does not allow you to operate freely. (Interview, police officer, Tamale, Aug 2021)

The above duality of international and local peacekeeping experiences will continue to inform how Ghanaian police officers undertake policing duties. In turn, this will continue to have influence on political decision-making to assemble other actors to co-intervene in internal operations.

‘Assembling’ peacekeeping personnel and experiences in Tamale

This section examines linkages between international peacekeeping experiences and everyday policing practices in Tamale. While the primary focus is on the police, the section also discusses the military in the context of its collaboration with the police in cases where violence relating to politics, chieftaincy and religion breaks out. The overarching aim is to understand how the police’s peacekeeping experiences come to expression locally, which includes an appreciation of how they partner with military officers to undertake internal operations.

Under the decentralised policing system in Ghana, the regional police commander in Tamale is empowered to ensure that police officers undertake daily operational and tactical duties for the purposes of enforcing the law (see Security and Intelligence Agencies Act, 2020, Act 1030). In enforcing the law, individual police officers (IPOs) and the FPU apply new ideas, skill sets, lessons and practices, which they have acquired from UN peacekeeping missions. Such experiences, as discussed earlier, include crime scene management, intelligence-led investigation, respect for human rights, crowd control measures, and so forth (Aubyn et al, 2019; Beek, 2016; Aning & Aubyn, 2013). There is no institutional mechanism to determine how experiences of IPOs are transferred and incorporated into policing duties. However, FGDs we conducted with police personnel indicated that experiences relating to investigation and crime scene management, which the police had acquired in UN peacekeeping missions in South Sudan and Congo DRC, had proven important in their policing duties in Tamale (FGD, police officers, Tamale, Aug 2021).

The FPU, which performs duties such as public order management and protection of critical infrastructure, has been useful in responding to security threats and crime scenes in Ghana. In the particular case of Tamale, the FPU was deployed in March 2014 to restore calm following the burning of cars at the premises of Radio Justice and Bayport Financial Services by a group of young men, who had threatened “to make [Tamale] ungovernable” (GhanaWeb, 2014). Furthermore, the counterterrorism unit of the police in Tamale responded to distress calls by two police officers, Lance Corporal Atsu Adanu and Lance Corporal Samuel Modzi, who were attacked by young people from the Kpamu–Fuo community, a suburb of Tamale, in November 2020 (GhanaWeb, 2020). This incident occurred when a suspect, Abdul Rahman, was to be arrested by the two police officers allegedly for theft. Earlier in July 2019, another police officer, Sergeant Agatha Nana Nabin, was murdered while on duty on the Kumbungu Road in Tamale. These three separate incidents elicited swift responses from both the regional police and national headquarters. In relation to the murder of Sergeant Nana Nabin, the former inspector-general of police, James Oppong Boanu, deployed a team of detectives from the Police Intelligence Unit (PIU), Homicide Unit (HU) and crime scene management experts, combining both local and peacekeeping experiences to pursue the suspects, leading to their arrest (Interview, senior police officer, Tamale, Aug 2020).

While these responses show a capacity to resolve some criminal cases involving service personnel, they nevertheless raise questions about the readiness of the GPS to respond in a similar manner to cases

involving civilian victims. The perceived gap in willingness to respond deepens mistrust between the citizenry and the police about the latter's role in protecting the former. As a result, and given evolving security challenges in Tamale that centre on chieftaincy conflicts, threats of terrorism, violent robberies, violence related to politics and ethnicity, youth radicalism and vigilantism (Aning & Abdallah, 2013; Tonah, 2012; Edu-Afful & Allotey-Pappoe, 2016), drawing in the military has become a regular feature of internal operations in Tamale and neighbouring towns and villages such as Yendi, Bimbilla and Chereponi.

In such joint operations, the two – GPS and GAF – engage in crowd control, night patrols and the protection of palaces (the homes of Ghana's traditional leaders) where violence associated with contestations around the occupancy of Skins and/or Gates⁴ routinely occur. With specific reference to Tamale and its environs, a joint military and police force under Operation Calm Life was deployed to Bimbilla to forestall disturbances that were envisaged to emerge after a court verdict over a long-standing chieftaincy conflict (Ansah, 2018). Until the installation of a new *Ya-Na* (king), Abukari Mahama, in Dagbon in January 2019, joint police-military deployments were a regular feature in Yendi, to prevent the escalation of this particular chieftaincy dispute into a violent conflict (Carcious, 2013:72; Issifu, 2015:34). Here, while the police and the military jointly maintained law and order, the latter also played a role in day and night patrols, mounted snap roadblocks, conducted searches, and served as part of protection unit to the *Ya-Na*'s palace.

These experiences, as assembled, arose from the amalgamation of home-grown and international peacekeeping theatres, which partially prevent the escalation of disputes into violent conflicts (Interview, military officer, Tamale, Aug 2019). In some cases, when disputes degenerate into violent conflict, co-deployment of the military with police officers helps to reduce the number of potential casualties (see Edu-Afful, 2022). One security analyst spoke positively about military-police collaboration in Tamale:

Operation Calm Life, for example, is helping in combating crimes in Tamale, and other parts of Northern Region. But the real power of the operation lies in the shifting of relationships or displacement of existing police power, and re-organising it with the involvement of the military. They [the military] bring difference to bear; the green uniform instils fear; they bring logistics such as patrol vehicles, sometimes armoured ones; they bring physic and manpower. In my view, the combination of the police, the military, and other experiences of security actors should be sustained because this [assemblage of ideas and actors] will bring sanity in Tamale. (Interview, security analyst, Accra, Dec 2021).

To further understand the productive effects of the assemblage framework in Tamale, a military officer shared his experience in internal operation:

Our [the military's] involvement in different operations and our deployment together with the police to protect palaces of traditional leaders in the north and Tamale is a major contributor to restoring peace and sanity. Our sheer force and manpower, our vehicles and constant patrols send signals to the locals that they cannot continue to misbehave. (Interview, military officer, Accra, Jan 2022.)

A senior police officer who had participated in operations in Tamale concurred with this viewpoint:

Although sometimes joint deployments create command and control frictions, they are generally useful as the weakness of the police in terms of numbers, logistics and robustness is supported by the military. The combination of different experiences practices and different technologies is really useful. (Interview, police officer, Accra, Jan 2022)

Despite these generally positive views of joint GAF-GPS operations in Tamale, the involvement of the GAF in internal operations has often reflected poorly on the GPS, and raised questions about the capacity of the police to maintain peace unassisted. The need for military intervention certainly creates the impression that the GPS is the weaker agency. One police interviewee noted the differences in police and military functions, and questioned whether the perception of police weakness could be understood from their different operational mandates (Interview, police officer, Tamale, Aug 2019). Whereas the police have the responsibility to maintain peace, and protect lives and property, the military plays a complementary role, but is deployed in larger numbers, especially prior to crises and during emergencies to contribute to law enforcement (Mbowura, 2014; Issifu, 2015). As a result, police and military officers' performances should be understood within the context of their varied mandates, training regimes, and operational principles rather than automatically assuming the GPS is an inefficient institution (Interview, senior police officer, Tamale, July 2019).

⁴ Skin is the symbol of chiefly authority in northern Ghana. When a chief is enskinned, he is seated on a skin of a chosen animal to symbolise his authority. This is equivalent to the stool in the south. Gate as used in this article refers to the two families – Abudu and Andani – who rotate the Dagbon chieftaincy.

Notwithstanding this, joint deployments that aim to arrest offenders have been problematic in some cases. Most often, the GAF sees itself as a more robust force, seeks to assume the leadership role, and largely does not adhere to the operational principles of policing although they learn aspects of it in UN peacekeeping theatres (Agordzo, 2009). As a result of this military posture, the police are unable to gather the necessary evidence or produce exhibits that will allow for an eventual prosecutorial process. A police respondent attributed this challenge to the disparate trainings offered to the police and the military. While the police are trained to deal with the general population, and therefore have the technical skills to follow procedures of arrest, detention and prosecution, the military is trained to protect the territorial integrity of Ghana and wage wars against potential enemies. They are therefore “combative and quick to assault, thereby destroying pieces of evidence needed to help the police to pursue successful prosecution” (Interview, senior police officer, Tamale, July 2019).

Such confrontational posture, which is representative of what domestic peacekeeping looks like to the local populations in Tamale, has created significant reputational challenges for joint internal operations. For instance, in the Saboba–Chereponi land conflict involving Chokosis and Konkombas, which was re-ignited in April 2019, the deployment of joint security forces was resisted by the warring factions, leading to attacks on police and military officers (Interview, senior police officer, Aug 2019). In such situations, when the locals need protection, some security personnel engage in crackdowns and human rights abuses leading to negative reactions. While this constitutes a taint on their international human rights records and professional integrity achieved over the years (ibid), it also creates relational challenges between the peacekeepers and the citizenry’s need for protection.

State and non-state actors in policing and security provision

In policing and security provision in Tamale, relationships exist between traditional authorities and police officers, which is established through local traditional practices, norms and skills acquired through national police training, capacity-building programmes and police operational experiences, as well as UN pre-deployment training. All of these are cyclically connected to and impacted by engagement in UN peacekeeping missions (Aubyn et al, 2015; Aning and Aubyn, 2013). This section examines the nexus between local policing and security provision by analysing the practices of police officers and non-state traditional authorities in Tamale. It also examines how the synergy between the two actors is shaped and influenced by UN peacekeeping experiences.

The partnership between the police and non-state authorities is shaped in fundamental ways by the traditional character of the city, which recognises the Dagbon paramountcy in Yendi and seven sub-paramountcies in Tamale as critical to mediation and conflict resolution. Embedded in this structure is an assemblage of actors, including a council of elders, community leaders, family heads and youth groups (*nachimbas*). All of these actors are recognised as co-contributors to peace-making through conflict prevention, mediation and adjudication of cases and as co-providers of security. *Nachimbas* specifically undertake night policing duties, arresting suspicious persons and responding to crimes in local communities (Badong, 2008).

This range of actors holds occasional meetings with state actors to understand each other’s roles and functions and to what extent partnering is possible in Tamale. The meetings also serve as courtesy calls to introduce state-sanctioned security personnel to traditional authorities in the area. They establish and define the rules governing their working relationships and negotiate a shared and mutual understanding of collective challenges, while simultaneously acknowledging national laws and respecting traditional norms and practices. Such meetings also serve to emphasise to the police that even though their presence represents formal state structures, ie the central government, their legitimacy as law enforcers may very well be undermined if they do not exhibit courteous and cooperative behaviour vis-à-vis traditional authorities such as community heads, leaders of ethnic groups, youth leaders, religious leaders and especially paramount chiefs. These interactions have been useful in establishing an informal framework to work collaboratively within, resulting most often in consensual and negotiated relations between formal and informal security orders. Secretary to the Gulkpe *Naa* (chief of Gulkpegu) confirmed this assertion:

At Gulkpe *Naa*’s palace, we call the police for briefings, we give them early warning signs because we know the community, we know the dangers and when a criminal act is likely to happen. At the same time, we have traditional mechanisms for mediation and conflict resolution, and this includes belief in witchcraft, which we use to ensure justice and peace in various communities. (Interview, secretary, Tamale, Aug 2021)

A police officer shared this view, and further explained that such interactions allow police officers in Tamale to be on top of security situations as they arise:

Unlike the traditional mechanisms adopted by chiefs and traditional authorities, GPS has formal mechanisms and processes of law enforcement: arrest, interrogation, and prosecution among others. But importantly we [police officers] share security tips with the traditional authorities, where we bring our community engagement experiences from UN peacekeeping to bear on our security discussions. (Interview, police officer, Tamale, Aug 2021)

These two separate interviews show the uniqueness of mechanisms adopted by police and traditional authorities in conflict resolution, policing and security provision. But to appreciate how these methodologies are assembled for effective policing in Tamale, a police officer reflected on both local and international experiences:

The traditional nature of our communities, and my years of experience in policing show that police officers cannot maintain law and order and combat crimes alone. Traditional leaders cannot adjudicate and mediate cases alone. A combination of the formal and traditional mechanisms has been useful in many instances in Tamale and other towns in Ghana and this means that there should always be compromises. My long years of engaging in peacekeeping also teach me different lessons to cooperate with different stakeholders. (Interview, police officer, Accra, Jan 2022)

The above extract shows that multiple, interacting sources of power can often deal with crime and law enforcement matters more effectively than a single source of power. Another police officer corroborated this viewpoint and described how UN experiences shape policing work in Tamale:

Because community policing principles teach us to collaborate with traditional systems rather than work against them, we are mindful [of] how we relate with them when there are conflicts to resolve here in Tamale. This is because Tamale is a volatile area. But because some of the traditions like belief in witchcraft go contrary to the laws of Ghana; they abuse human rights, we try to manage them, we try to balance the law principles and tradition. (Interview, police officer, Tamale, Aug 2021)

Reiterating the importance of collaboration, respect for diversity and traditional systems, a police officer who served in the Congo shared how peacekeeping experience can be useful in joint security provision:

Community policing and community engagement works in UN missions help police officers to build mutual trust, develop empathy for vulnerable populations, manage expectations and cooperate with all types of people in providing security. Our traditional policing training programs focus more on firing, patrols, arrest of suspected criminal, but we are learning things in UN missions and applying them in Ghana and here in Tamale even though there are many challenges locally. (Interview, police officer, Tamale, Aug 2021)

The challenges are indeed many. Scholars such as Aning (2015:26), Atuguba (2007:5) and Ayee (2019) highlight issues of logistics, corruption and political interference as some of the main challenges to police operations in Ghana. In turn, Badong (2008) has examined challenges to policing from the perspective of traditional authorities. These challenges are attributable to lack of accountability and oversight mechanisms that would ensure that actions of traditional authorities are regulated both by the state and the populace. Unlike the police and other security agencies, there are limited mechanisms to hold chiefs accountable if their actions contravene the fundamental laws of the land and bye-laws within Tamale. Moreover, most community watch groups such as *nachimbas*, which support chiefs in local administration, often do not receive formal training on how to provide security. In contradistinction to the police who rely on legal processes for their authority to maintain law and order, chiefs tend to use traditional belief systems, witchcraft accusations and kinship that inadvertently challenge the rule of law, human rights principles, security and the formal justice system (Musah, 2013; Adinkrah, 2004:337; Palmer, 2010:14).

In the case of witchcraft accusations, for example, Bamvim *Naa* (chief of Bamvim) argued that in some cases, before community youth groups bring an accused person to the palace, community residents, primarily groups of youth, take the law into their own hands and kill suspected individuals, and/or burn their houses and other properties. (Interview, Bamvim *Naa*, Tamale, Aug 2021; see also Palmer, 2010:14; Atobrah et al, 2022). However, when they succeed in bringing accused persons to the palace, the justice process begins and those found guilty are sent to the traditional shrines. While this is intended to ascertain the truthfulness of an accusation, it is also intended to protect the accused persons from mob justice (Interview, Sanar *Naa*, Sagnarigu, Aug 2021). Mob justice has created divisions between and among families and ethnic groups on the one hand, and between formal and informal orders on the other hand. Linked to this is the challenge of kinship relations in Tamale (see Stone, 2010:5; Assimeng,

1999:74; Nukunya 2003:17). Although they strengthen family and communal ties, and as such are integral to how conflict is resolved, they also constitute considerable challenges for the police. Individuals are bound by kinship duty to protect their own when they are in difficulties, for example when they commit an offence and must contend with the state-sanctioned security and justice system. A respondent explained:

Due to kinship relations, in Dagbon, we don't take people to the police station, it is like a taboo because it leads to mistrust between families. So, family heads are called, sit together and resolve issues. (Interview, Lamashenaa, Tamale, Aug 2019).

These traditional interferences can be and generally are overlooked when the contention is of a civil nature. However, in criminal cases such as rape, it creates problem between chiefs and the police on the one hand, and between parents of the victim and accused on the other. Interference and attempts to shape the outcome of a case occur at every level of the GPS' s work, as one senior police officer explained:

They give you money, yam and guinea fowl to influence you. Therefore, we are not getting solutions to crimes. If the regional police commander has an interest in a case, he calls me, and I have to drop it. Chiefs and traditional authorities can call the commander and say: 'Why did you come to arrest my son without telling me?' Assemblymen can challenge the police for arresting a person in their community. In effect, here [in Ghana] legal processes are not followed. The influence of political leaders, traditional leaders, pastors, imams and assembly members is a big challenge to criminal prosecution in Tamale. (Interview, senior police officer, Tamale, Aug 2019).

Corroborating this assertion, the head of the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) in Tamale revealed that besides interference from chiefs, family members – including of the victim – often insist that criminal cases under investigation should be discharged for the families to settle themselves. And if there are no witnesses, there is nothing that the police can do (Interview, head of DOVVSU, Tamale, Aug 2019). This is evidently a challenge to effective collaboration between formal and traditional orders and thus affects police officers' daily work. Certainly, it makes it difficult, if not impossible, to apply in any straightforward way the human rights principles or principles of gender equality that police officers often emphasise as particularly pronounced learning points from peacekeeping. The structure of the GPS leaves little space for police officers to apply their varied peacekeeping experiences in the performance of their duties. This is because local-level dynamics provide relatively limited space for the GPS to manoeuvre vis-à-vis traditional and broader political interference.

Conclusion

This article has employed the concept of assemblage to frame the analysis of policing practices in Tamale in order to understand relations between international peacekeeping experiences and policing practices in Tamale in northern Ghana. The paper shows that forms of knowledge, skills and experiences gained from international peacekeeping environments such as community policing, human rights protection, and crowd control may have transpired in policing, and as such influenced security enforcement at the local level. It is at the same time clear that whatever impact UN peacekeeping might have had and continues to have on policing – good or bad is limited given local-level dynamics where traditional authorities play influential roles.

The concept of assemblage helps to demonstrate the effects of blending peacekeeping experiences and domestic practices of the GPS as the primary state-sanctioned law enforcement agency – at times in conjunction with the GAF – to shape policing in Tamale. Through interviews with individual police officers, the paper has highlighted how community engagement and community policing experiences have shaped conceptions of policing and order-making that are generally positive. Likewise, logistical challenges aside, the FPU and counterterrorism unit in Tamale, also reflecting peacekeeping experiences, have responded to crimes and prevented the escalation of potentially volatile situations. A primary strength of using the concept of assemblage is that it is not limited to capturing formal state security actors. On the contrary, it helps to recognise non-state actors such as chiefs and youth groups, whose norms, belief systems and practices are indispensable in making order and establishing a secure environment in Tamale.

Following from this, the centre of gravity of Tamale' s security environment are partnerships between the police and traditional authorities. While actors within traditional systems of authority share early warning signs of potential conflicts and crimes, the police bring their community engagement experiences to bear on their interaction, emphasising how the two can work together effectively, and the types of roles that the police can – and are allowed to – play. By extension, there are occasional hostilities between the two arising from the

GPS' s formalised nature and the traditional belief systems of the chiefs, which often challenge the rule of law and human rights principles that underpin formal policing and UN peacekeeping. Witchcraft and kinship ties do not only constitute a perceived danger to individual police officers, but also challenge the police' s understanding of and attempt to apply principles of human rights, gender equality and community policing. Certainly, they rarely mesh in any simple way with order-making practices at the local level.

Consequently, a more formalised framework that guides the interaction between the GPS and traditional authority actors is needed. While recognising that the two actors represent the duality of modern and traditional states (Atta-Asamoah, 2016) with different sets of rules, regulations, values, belief systems, and operational principles, the framework can define clear boundaries and specify how they can collaborate to address everyday policing concerns. At the same time, the challenges of kinship intertwined with witchcraft and politics should generate a broader discussion toward development of a new theory. Particularly, kinship and kinship relations should not be limited to just blood and marital relations (see Stone, 2010; Nukunya, 2003), but reflect the realities of modern societies in which state actors such as politicians and police officers, families, community members, and traditional authority actors relate. Anthropologists such as Carsten (2004) increasingly see kinship relations occurring through the sharing of food, learning of languages, getting access to land, or a shared history or nation, as well as through migration. This nuanced notion of kinship could be the basis for developing a new theory that can shape interaction between police and non-state actors, and policing in general.

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