

# Understanding Police Use of Force and its Effect on Individuals Fundamental Rights in Ghana

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**Abstract:-** This study aims at exploring and understanding the Ghana Police Service's mode of operations with particular attention to the use of force and its effect on individuals' fundamental rights. The Ghana Police Service (GPS) is mandated by article 200 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to enforce democratic policing principles. Act 200 (3) stipulates that the Service shall be equipped to perform its traditional role of maintaining law and order. The study critically examines the current procedures use by the GPS to minimize the use of force, determine whether police officers who use force or excessive force are held accountable and identify the challenges faced by the institution during an encounter. Therefore, the study adopted qualitative approach, using interviews, journal articles and local newspapers to widely understand both police and citizens perspective and lived experience of the issues surrounding police use of force. Purposive and snowballing technique were used to select participants and data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Findings drawn from the study indicated a new insight into the phenomenon, bringing a lasting solution to minimize police use of force while contributing to the existing knowledge of literature to address the relative absence of data in this study area in Ghana.

**Keywords:** Ghana police service, police use of force, brutality, fundamental rights, democratic policing

## I. INTRODUCTION

It has been widely assumed that the Ghana Police Service has been characterised by abuse of power and authority by its members and the circumstances in which police officers continue to use force or excessive force against the civilian population, seek to question the government and the institution's respect for the rights of its citizens (Tankebe, 2008). This study therefore underscores why in a democratic country like Ghana this phenomenon continues unchecked as if this practice has been accepted as a norm within the institution. To many Ghanaians, democratic policing is primarily understood as a 'service to the universal citizens' based on a commitment to 'human rights' (Hinton & Newburn 2009: p. 167). Although considerable empirical findings (Tankebe, 2008; Palmiotto, 2017; Bayley 2001) have shown that police officers have authority to use force to control crimes in society, maintain law and order, and to apprehend suspects who pose as threat to them and other citizens in the course of exercising their legally mandated duties. However, this legitimate authority typically rests on individual officer's discretion, as there are various challenges that officers face when it comes to when and how to use force. This legitimate authority therefore appears to be the most difficult and

controversial decision a police officer will make during his or her duties regarding the "use of force doctrine" which regulates the actions of police officers and balance security needs with ethical considerations for the rights and well-being of the citizens.

While some efforts have been made by successive governments to reform the Ghana Police Service, insecurity remains a challenge and has become a serious concern for many Ghanaians, with the government and the police being heavily blamed for not doing much to protect its citizens (Aning, 2001). This is exemplified in the UNDP (2007) Ghana Human Development report - as there are widespread public claims of police use of force or excessive use of force, arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, interrogation and use of violence to extract information, infringement on citizens' privacy rights and forcible dispersal of demonstrators are so prevalent in Ghana, with a concluding remark that, "In fact, human insecurity is evident along most streets, in both rural and urban communities" (UNDP, 2007; p. 23). This assertion points to the fact that Ghanaians deserve a police service that upholds the interest of the people instead of exclusively safeguarding the authority of the state. It is for this reason that the study seeks to analyse this phenomenon as there are widespread of public claims and perceptions on police frequent use of force or excessive use of force especially in Ghana but due to inadequate literature and statistical data, such claims sometimes cannot be properly established so this study aims at filling this gap to ensure that adequate security is provided by the police to promote individuals fundamental human rights.

## II. HISTORY OF THE GHANA POLICE SERVICE

Historically, professional policing was introduced to Ghana, the then Gold Coast, in 1831 by the British Colonial Authorities. Police researchers are of the view that policing in the Gold Coast originally started at the time when the then governor, Captain George MacLean formed a body of one hundred and twenty-nine men to maintain and enforce the provisions of the Treaty of Peace signed with the Fante chiefs and the King of Ashanti (Teiku 1984, Boateng 2015). These one hundred and twenty-nine men were trained and tasked to perform civil police duties. However, in 1873, an Ordinance was passed to formalize the operations of the Gold Coast Police Force. This was a period of British assertiveness against the Ashanti communities, and the Governor at that time sought assistance from the British military stationed in

Nigeria. Quantson (2006) gave an impressive account on the issue and how British sought assistance from the neighbouring country – Nigeria and stated that about 700 men who were Hausas' from the Northern part of Nigeria were brought into the country to assist the Colonial Police to maintain law and order. After the end of the conflict, some of the men who were brought in continued to stay in the country and were given civilian policing duties to perform.

Interestingly, the end of the conflict led to the promulgation of an Ordinance which “sought to provide for better regulation and discipline of the Armed Gold Coast Police” (Quantson, 2006, p.6). Accordingly, the Hausa police who were brought in from Nigeria used brutal tactics in discharging their duties. This behaviour, according to Appiagyei-Atua (2006) earned them the nickname “buga-buga”, meaning “beat-beat” in Hausa. The Gold Coast Police Force was renamed the Gold Coast Constabulary in 1876. In view of this, several units were created, such as the Railways and Mines Detachments and Escort Police, Marine Police and Criminal Investigations Department were also created (Quantson, 2006). These units were assigned different roles to play. For instance, the Escort Police were given guard and escort duties in the important mining areas, the Marine Police was focused on smuggling and looting, and the Criminal Investigations Department was used to gather intelligence (Aning, 2007).

In view of this, a new ordinance was passed in 1894 which gave the authority to form some civil police in the Gold Coast. These civil police later became the new Gold Coast Police Force, which consisted of 400 Constables. According to Quantson (2006), the passage of the new ordinance also led to the establishment of police stations and the standardisation of policing in the British controlled areas of the Gold Coast. Most of the constables were illiterate, and training was heavily militarised. The police officers that passed-out after the training exhibited “attitudes that generated intimidation and bullying with an almost robotic obedience to repressive colonial laws that were regime centred” (Quantson, 2006, p.7; Boateng 2015).

Generally, the colonial police force main goal was to achieve the following; First, establishing and maintaining security for trade in European goods and as a vanguard for colonial expansion into the hinterland for increased exploitation of agricultural and mineral resources (Ward, 1948, pg.184, Boateng 2015). The second purpose was to protect the ruling and affluent class. The 1896 mandate issued by Governor George Maclean uniquely presents the prevalence of these two goals. This mandate established that “no police should be stationed where there were no Europeans” (Gillespie, 1955:36). During the colonial era, concerns were also raised about the ethical standard of the police among the public and their efficiency.

Gillespie (1955) noted that successive governors and police commissioners described the police as “worse than inefficient”. This observation underscores the ineffectiveness

of the colonial police in the maintenance of the colonial government machinery. Conversely, police ineffectiveness was not the only issue confronting the police. Equally important was the extreme public distrust in the police, due to systemic police use of force or brutality. Systemic in the sense that, thenature and character of the Gold Coast Constabulary was initiated and cultivated by the British colonial authorities believing the only means of developing a conducive atmosphere for successful trade was to have a police force that would be ruthless to the indigenous citizens (Atuguba, 2003; Killingray, 1991). Indeed, for the British to achieve this aim was by ways of recruiting the “Hausas” from the Northern part of Nigeria, and they formed a unified force with the mandate to enforce the laws of colonialists through brutalisation. Arguably, Historians suggest that this brutal and alien character of the force made the police unpopular among the citizenry (Killingray, 1991; Gillespie, 1955; Ward, 1948).

Immediately after Ghana gained its independence in 1957, the British left the country and the Gold Coast Constabulary was renamed the Ghana Police Service (GPS). The first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah took the initiative to Africanize the Ghana Police Service. This initiative made Ghanaians the occupants of the police top hierarchy (positions formerly occupied by the Europeans). Many Africans were enlisted into the Police Force as junior officers. The women branch of the service was then established, to be responsible for Juvenile crimes and offences committed by women. In 1958, the first Ghanaian Police Commissioner, Mr. E. R. T. Madjitey was appointed to head the Service.

While efforts were made to rebrand the police force, all that changed was the name, as the service retained all existing units and divisions. The GPS as an institution is a colonial creation and despite it been 62 years since Ghana attained independence from the British on March 6, 1957, and despite numerous Commissions of Inquiry that have been set up by various governments for police reforms subject to article 5 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the Ghana Police Service continues to struggle on its image derived from its colonial origin as a repressive, brutal and politically motivated force which serves the interest of the state as well as political elites first and the citizens second (Boateng 2015). Thus, post-colonial policing in Ghana took the shape and character like that of colonial policing.

### III. POLICE USE OF FORCE

Traditionally, policing functions are vested in a group of selected individuals officially organised and coordinated by the state. The justification for state control of policing, otherwise known as the social contract theory which was originally developed by philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) and John Locke (1632 – 1704) appears fascinating and credible in the sense that sources of police authority is believed to be originated from this theory and forms a coherent pattern to strengthening police and citizens relationship. To this effect, the need for members of the

society to trade off some degree of their freedom to the state in return for a measure of protection that provides primary justification for policing (Kleinig, 1996a). Bowling and Foster (2002) in their work on 'Policing and the Police' emphasise the importance of policing in societies as follows: "human beings in a state of nature were prevented from enjoying basic rights: the rights to life, to liberty and to property because of ignorance, powerlessness, insecurity and arbitrary violence. To preserve these fundamental rights, it was necessary to set up civil government. Having set up a legislature to make laws and then a judiciary to apply it in individual cases, police were required to give it due execution to ensure that individuals rights are protected" (Bowling and Foster, 2002:981-98). Essentially, police in democratic countries such as Ghana have the responsibility to control crime, hold it in check, stop it from spreading and provide citizens with protections from law violators (Reckless, 1955).

Similarly, the United States Civil Rights Commission (1981: 481 – 482) stated the following about the police: "Police officers possess awesome powers. They perform their duties under conditions with the public eye upon them. Police officers are permitted only a margin of error in judgement under conditions that imposed high degrees of physical and mental stress. Their general responsibility to preserve peace and enforce the law carries with it the power to arrest and to use force -even deadly force". In this sense, the use of force is permitted and central to the work of police (Palmiotto, 2017). Therefore, this power granted to police must be justified according to legal status, professional standards as well as public expectations based on appropriate moral conduct and ethical considerations. According to Mitchell (2000: p. 2) this unique authority granted to the police can lead to physical abuse such as body harm and the psychological trauma experienced by the subjects can be detrimental. "Psychological trauma faced by victims who have experienced use of force or excessive use of force by the police can also manifest itself in many ways such as stress, anxiety, fear, paranoia, distrust, insomnia, anorexia, and depression". It is widely assumed that psychological stress in general often destroys many areas of life including job performance, ability to sustain employment, and everyday interactions with family and people in society. Family of fatally injured victims can often suffer many of the same psychological trauma as indicated by Mitchell.

In trying to explain police use of force focusing on suspect characteristics, encounter characteristics, and officer characteristics, other studies (Tankebe, 2011; Micucci & Gomme, 2005). Tankebe (2011) have examined police attitudes towards the use of force or excessive use of force. Tankebe (2008) conducted extensive survey on attitudes toward police use of force in Ghana. Out of the 181 officers in the Survey, 58 percentage agreed that it is sometimes acceptable to use more force than is legally required to make an arrest or prevent law violators from causing to others. Apart from this survey on overall police attitudes, several researchers have presented police officers with specific

scenarios on the use of force. The Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) 1996 conducted a Survey on police-citizens encounter and the overall results indicated that 45 million people have had face-to-face encounter with police over a 12-month period and that, out of this total, 500,000 people were subjected to use of force or excessive use of force by the police. This result is like the one conducted by Tankebe as mentioned above, and it indicates a new trend of human insecurity that is gradually permeating within the security architecture and it undermines the ethical considerations of the profession especially in Ghana.

In Ghana for example, while majority of the citizens respect the dignity of police officers, there are widespread conceptions and claims of some citizens that the use of force and other inhuman treatments adopted by police officers against citizens to gain absolute control over them can be exercised with caution (Ghana Human Rights Report, 2018). Some Ghanaians believed that the public attitude towards police use of force, is one of the unacceptable powers granted to public servants such as the police. The most disturbing aspect is that while exercising this legitimate authority, it can seriously lead to injuries or death and in most cases, it is the citizens that suffer the consequences. A typical case in point is the May 9, 2001 Accra Sports Stadium disaster in which about one hundred and twenty-six people died due to police indiscriminately firing of tear gas during a local match in Accra (BBC-News/ Africa 2001). Other recent examples include, April 21, 2006 in which four persons were shot and killed by police officers at Dansoman Estates in Accra as well as July 17, 2018 shooting incident that occurred at Manso-Nkwanta in the Ashanti Region in which seven unarmed civilians were shot and killed by armed police officers under the pretext that they were armed robbers (Graphic Online; July 2018). These evidences give credence to the fact that the GPS nature, character and mode of operations of modern-day policing has not changed from that of the colonial policing era after the country got its independence from the British (Aning 2007).

Conversely, the use of force has been described as an essential object of policing (Palmiotto, 2017) while in some jurisdictions it has been argued that it amounts to deception and intrinsically wrong because it conflicts with code of ethics of the profession, and specifically with the dignity and personal autonomy of its subjects (Kleinig, 1996b). Considerably, it has also been argued that it is "morally obligatory" (Miller, Blackeler and Alexandra, 1997) for police officers to protect life, another aspect of respect for personal autonomy and preserve order, which often require the potential for force or its actual deployment. This dilemma of duties leads to a practical balance requiring that the "exercise of force needs to be ethically justified by the ends that it realises" (Miller, Blackeler and Alexandra, 1997: 83). "Tough cops" believe that the citizenry is hostile towards police, and they identify with the police culture. They believe that experience and common sense are the best guides in dealing with the realities on the ground, and that power granted to

police to maintain law and order is sometimes appropriate and effective (Worden 1996: p. 26).

#### IV. POLICE USE OF FORCE AND INDIVIDUALS' FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

According to the Human Rights Watch (1998) and article 3 of the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials 1979, police officers can use force only when necessary and only to the extent required for the performance of their duties. It includes, but is not limited to unjustified shootings, severe beatings, fatal chokings, and rough treatment. These legal authorities presupposes that police officers have the power to use force but they must tread cautiously in the event of exercising their legitimate authority and always be mindful of the fact that any amount of force that exceeds what is objectively reasonable and necessary in any circumstances confronting them to subdue a subject who resists arrest or poses as a threat to others, is liable for justification and are answerable to the law (Manning 2005). For example, in the context of the Ghana Police Service, any operational policing strategy adopted should consider the operational environment and must be based on democratic principles, which do not infringe on the rights of individuals, whilst simultaneously protecting vulnerable and the marginalized in society against any threats that may resonate due to ethnic violence, chieftaincy disputes or public demonstrations. Such strategy must be supported by enabling democratic and legal principles such as fairness, reasonability and justice which are weighed against the use of force doctrine (Thibaut and Walker 1975).

In democratic countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and the United Kingdom, the only legitimate policing is policing that helps to create an enabling environment free from fear and favourable to the attainment of people's fundamental rights (Bayley, 2001). Article 19 (3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states: "The exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, carries with its special duties and responsibilities. This may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be provided by law and are necessary, (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; (b) For the protection of national security or of public order or of public health or morals." The fundamental principle here is that while the law allows law enforcement officers to exercise their discretionally powers such as the use of force to limit some aspect of individuals basic rights in order to protect others from aggression, or any action that will be detrimental to their life, their actions are answerable to the law. This caveat therefore challenges police officers to decide when interventions into the rights of some people are required and acceptable for the purposes of protecting the rights of others. In this context, the police ought to have a code of ethics, a defined body of knowledge, and pre-determined criteria and standards during encounters in order to safeguard the rights and dignity of the citizens (Das, 1995). This study has evaluated police use of force and its effect on individuals' fundamental rights. The critical issue that has set the citizens of Ghana apart from the police is the use of force or brutality

and this has been identified in the study literature. What makes the phenomenon more crucial is the Criminal Offences Act 1960 (Act 29) which clearly fails to define when force may be used, and when use of force will constitute a misconduct. It is in the light of this that the study critically examines the procedures use by the Ghana Police Service to minimize the use of force and to ascertain whether police officers who use force or excessive force are held accountable for their actions.

#### V. METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Qualitative research approach using semi-structured interview was adopted to interview police officers (both senior and other ranks) and citizens who have had encounter(s) with the police. Qualitative interview was useful for the chosen population because it offered an appropriate mechanism to gain access to a great variety of opinions that are ultimately representative of all the essential information required to achieve the study aims and objectives. Primary data was collected in four selected regions in Ghana using purposive and snowballing approach; Greater Accra, Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions were chosen for the study. The choice of the study areas was informed by police use of force or excessive use of force, crime trends, as well as proximity and confidence reposed in me by both police and citizens. Greater Accra which capital is Accra, was chosen because of its urban characteristics, high crime rate and other reported cases of police use of force or excessive use of force (Ghana Crime and Safety Report 2017) and the presence of the headquarters of a significant number of non-governmental organizations including the Ghana Police Service while the three northern regions (Upper East, Upper West and Northern) were selected because of the persistent chieftaincy, ethnic and land conflicts which usually result in loss of lives and properties.

In all, a total sample size of 60 comprising twenty (20) police officers (both senior and other ranks) and forty (40) civilians who have had encounter(s) with the police were selected from the four selected regions. Participants were asked a range of semi-structured interview questions based on pre-determined topic areas on Ghana Police Service, use of force, democratic policing, police accountability and respect for the rights of individuals. Data collected were subjected to rigorous thematic analysis to understand lived experience of participants who have had encounter with the police and how police officers perceived their institution based on public perception on the use of force. These included compilation of responses from the interview transcripts by organizing the data, generating categories, themes, and coding the data to test the emergent understandings from the responses (Marshall and Rossman 1999; Bryman 2016). This involves identifying issues of participants that supported the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data and identified several notable areas including responses to police use of force and accountability. Responses drawn from the interviews have therefore generated ideas and issues of concern for the researcher



beyond the remit set to investigate the phenomenon, which eventually will lead to policy formulation to minimize police use of force in Ghana.

## VI. FINDINGS

### *Police use of force*

The term use of force in policing requires a comprehensive discussion with both the civilians and the police. Quite distinctive features with varied ideas emerged which required the police to educate the public about their work especially on the use of force, as majority of the citizens claimed that the police have no right to use force during encounters. Based on this argument, one of the citizens interviewed stated this and I quote, *“The police uniform symbolises trust and confidence. However, if they use it to the disadvantage of the citizens and maltreat them, then the citizens will lose trust in the service”*. Contrary to this assertion, almost all police officers interviewed claimed that it is part of their work and they have been trained to use minimum force to bring situations under control especially if a subject pose as a threat to them or others in society. Basically, all the officers interviewed were able to explain the use of force in policing and went further to explain how this usually occur. When I posed the question whether they approve the use of force, majority of them responded that it depends on the situation on the ground more particularly, the misdemeanour of the subject involved. They however responded that the answer is in two folds; Yes, because police are trained to use minimum force for subjects to act in certain order while maintaining law and order, but the force applied must be proportionate to the resistance force emanating from the subject. No, because it rather escalates the situation and makes it more volatile which usually leads to injuries and deaths.

One male officer with ten years' experience suggested that, *“The Police Education Unit must intensify its public education programme to enable the public to understand their work and this will put an end to unnecessary confrontations and wrongful accusations that usually come from the public”*. Interestingly, one of the citizens who was interviewed perceived police role as that of the ‘father and son’ and argued that she usually finds it extremely difficult to understand why police will use force or excessive force on the very people they have sworn to protect. *“I think that the police are there to protect us from existential threats of violence. Any person in distress will look up to the police for help. It is like a child looking up to his father to protect him from bullies or from being beaten up by others, in that regard, the ordinary person on the street looks up to the police for adequate protection from threats of violence”*. Based on the views expressed by both police and citizens, it became evident that the most challenging issue confronting the general public in Ghana is police use of force. This is due to lapses that has been identified within the Criminal Offenses Act 1960 (Act 29) which fails to set out when force may be used, and when use of force will constitute a misconduct. The study therefore

recommends a thorough review of a section of the act to include when force may be used, and when use of force will constitute a misconduct. In doing so, it will provide both police and citizens with a clear and specific set of guidelines relating to the use of force as there are evidences that suggest that this phenomenon usually erodes citizens trust in police (Thompson and Lee 2004).

### *Accountability*

Police accountability remains an issue in Ghana considering some of the responses I gathered from the civilians during the interviews. Manning (2005) argues that democratic police are publicly accountable, subject to the rule of law, respect the rights of individuals and that they can use force on citizens only under limited and dangerous circumstances. Even though these are what the police have set for themselves as contained in the Police Service Act 1970 (Act 350), but in practice, that is not what the citizens experience and their conduct seem to contradict their own rules of engagement. While GPS has established Police Intelligence and Professional Standard Bureau (PIPS) as an internal mechanism to deal with officers who misconduct themselves to ensure accountability, however, majority of the citizens interviewed believed the unit lacks democratic policing credentials. According to them PIPS is being headed by the Inspector General of Police and now it is in two regions out of the sixteen, so what is the guarantee that such officers can be sanctioned appropriately if they trampled upon individuals' rights? This brings to focus the question of, *“who watches the watchmen?”* (Parry 2007). The police have become judges in their own course as alluded by one of the interviewees (civilians) who have had encounter with the police. Some police officers who were also interviewed believed the establishment of PIPS as an internal mechanism to deal with officers' misconduct is considered as a calculated step to modernise its operations and this has lifted the image of the profession - some officers have become less aggressive during encounters with the public. One Chief Inspector stated unequivocally that, *“when you know that you are strictly under supervision of a unit or you are being watched by your superiors, you conduct yourself more appropriately because you will be required to justify any action that you take”*.

One police officer (Lance Corporal) believed the establishment of PIPS is significant in the sense that the unit has dealt with personnel in many instances where some officers who took the law into their own hands have been investigated and sanctioned while others have been dismissed from the service. According to him some officers believe the unit is more sympathetic to the public rather than their own members. One critical issue that emerged from the interview was that currently PIPS can be found in only two regions that is Greater Accra and Ashanti out of the sixteen so in effect, there will be no proper monitoring to prosecute officers who go contrary to the law. One of the civilians interviewed stated, *“In light of the disturbing images that have gone viral on various social media platforms, showing a police officer beating a*

*nursing mother at the Midlands Savings and Loans Banking Hall in Accra and the May 9, 2001 Accra Sports Stadium disaster where one hundred and twenty-six civilians lost their lives. The public are yet to witness any prosecution or expulsion of some of these officers from the service".* These incidences coupled with some narrations from the citizens who were interviewed showed that the unit is ineffective because it can be found in two regions and this defeat the purpose upon which the unit was established to ensure police accountability.

#### *Political interference*

One male police officer with fifteen years in active service explained that the profession is currently under sieged because of politics. According to him the 1992 Constitution of Ghana has contributed to this complexity and must be reviewed. The officer believed that the prospects of the GPS can be achieved only if the institution is decoupled from politics. But findings drawn from the study indicated that this is assertion seems impossible to occur especially in Ghana where the president appoints most of the senior officers including the IGP and controls the Police Council as well. Another female officer in the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) also expressed concern about the way and manner politicians are making their work difficult and attributed it to the current constitution – 1992. According to her and I quote, *"See this, the article 202 (1) of the 1992 Constitution stipulates that the President of the Republic shall appoint the Inspector General of Police (IGP) in consultation with the Council of State. The government also appoints the head of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) as well as the Commissioners of Police at the National level. Also, the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana serves as the Chairman of the Police Council while the Minister of Interior who was appointed by the President also have political control of the police across the country"*. She intimated that if police officers continue to operate under this current constitution how can the police be independent, he asked. Some of the citizens who were interviewed also advocated for a robust review of the 1992 Constitution to enable the police operate freely without any external influence or without fear or favour. According to them, the institution must be allowed to elect their own IGP and other officers based on merit, competence and dedicated service as ascribed in some public institutions. They also recommended that the Police Council must be replaced by an Independent Police Commission to win public trust in the police.

#### *Training*

Police training in Ghana takes approximately nine months at the basic level whereas command level takes between six to nine months according to one of the police officers. When I asked whether the duration at the basic level is adequate to equip them for their future roles, majority of the police officers said no it is not adequate to prepare us with the requisite knowledge and skills needed to perform effectively

and efficiently. While the remaining officers felt that the duration of the training is adequate because majority of their members are performing creditably well in their areas of endeavours even outside of the country. Some of them go on peace missions and during such periods they also interact and receive similar training like their foreign counterparts. However, it has been observed that the training offered at the training school appears to be theoretical and lacks the requisite practical aspect appropriate to prepare and develop their professional competence that will enable them to perform their daily duties effectively. This observation was made when I asked the question, *"In your opinion, do you think police officers apply the knowledge and skills received during training on the field?"*. One of the police officers who is a Constable believed that the GPS should focus on continuous running of in-service training for members to enable them to be abreast with current trends of combating crimes and other related issues.

#### *Logistical constraints*

Logistics such as vehicles for routine patrols, communication equipment, basic protective gear, office equipment such as computers, printers and accommodation are the major challenges that confronting the service and this came to light when I asked the question, *"what are the major challenges facing the GPS during an encounter with the public?"* Majority of the officers who were interviewed revealed that logistical constraints are hampering their work and they can be effective to combat crimes when they are well resourced which the institution lacks now. According to them, majority of the police stations don't have office telephones which they can use to invite suspects to the station unless they go to the vicinity of the suspect which usually leads to physical confrontations. But one officer who happens to be a Chief Inspector indicated that, he doesn't agree with his colleagues who usually complain about logistics. According to him, the current IGP and the government are doing everything within their powers to procure the necessary equipment for the police to enable them to perform their duties effectively. What is expected from members is how such equipment are properly utilised as according to him, most of the equipment have become obsolete because of lack of maintenance. During the interview it was revealed that one district police office which has five police stations in different towns has only one vehicle. Besides, all the roads leading to the towns are unmotorable which in effect makes controlling of crimes in such areas difficult.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The greatest expectation of every Ghanaian is the provision of adequate security protection by the government and its security agencies. The public perception of the GPS is characterized by widespread of police use of force or brutality especially against the poor and marginalized who most often become victims or target of this circumstances (Hough, 2004). The main objectives of this study were to examine empirically

three main issues: First, examine the procedures use by the GPS to minimize the use of force. Second, ascertain whether police officers who use force or excessive force are held accountable for their actions and third, identify the challenges faced by the GPS during police-citizens encounter. Evidences presented in this study are based on data from both police and citizens in four selected regions in Ghana using semi-structured interviews. Findings drawn from the study revealed that the most challenging issue facing Ghanaians is police use of force or brutality. This is consistent with other studies (Tankebe, 2011; BJS 1996) on Ghanaians attitude towards police use of force as well as a Survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice and Statistics on police-citizens encounter in the US. These studies indicated an inherent support for democratic policing that goes beyond police use of force. However, in the case of Ghana, it will not be out of place to suggest that this critical democratic policing principle might be weakened by continuous distrust with how Ghanaians continue to experience police use of force or brutality. This study has concentrated on those aspects and has highlighted the need for police reforms in Ghana. It emerged from the study that the GPS can improve its human rights violations if the administration and operations of the Service is decoupled from politics, but this issue seems far-fetched especially in Ghana where the President of the Republic appoints the Inspector General of Police, Minister of Interior, Commissioners of Police and controls the Police Council as well. For instance, apart from political interference, lack of police accountability, lack of consistent in-service training, the issue of use of force or brutality, arbitrary arrest and detention, infringement on citizens' privacy rights and forcible dispersal of demonstrators are so prevalent in Ghana as was exemplified in the UNDP (2007) Ghana Human Development Report. The study had identified these phenomena and has offered recommendations to ensure that police use of force is minimized, but one critical issue that needs to be addressed is the revision of the Criminal Code 1960 (Act 29) which fails to define when and how force can be used, and when use of force will constitute a misconduct. In this sense, the institution must strengthen its human rights commitments and replace the Police Council with an Independent Police Commission to promote citizens trust in the police. Thus, the Ghana Police Service must develop a national security strategy and a policy framework that is rooted in fundamental human rights to protect individuals from any existential threats such as police use of force which is inimical to their survival.

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