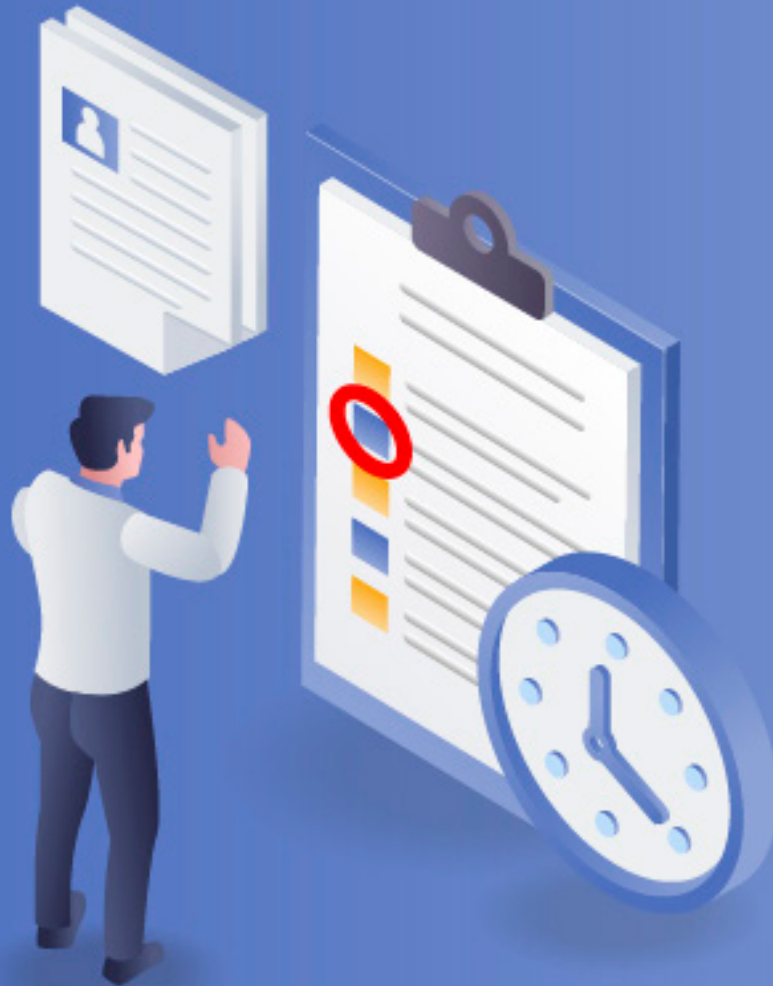




Journal of Policy and Planning (JPP)

ISSN: 3066-4543 (ONLINE)

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 1 (2026)



**PUBLISHED BY
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA**

Protocol, Bribes and Public Trust: Recruitment-Integrity Challenges in Ghana's Security Services, 2024-2025

Kwesi Botchwey^{1*}, Emmanuel Nortey Botchway², Mabel Korsah Cunningham²

Article Information

Received: September 19, 2025

Accepted: December 09, 2025

Published: July 20, 2026

Keywords

Ghana, Police Integrity, Protocol System, Public Trust, Recruitment Corruption, Security Services

ABSTRACT

Between mid-2024 and late-2025, Ghana's security service recruitment faced significant public scrutiny due to allegations of political interference, bribery, and fraudulent enlistment. Notable cases, including the '30 slots per parliamentary candidate' scandal, the GH¢1.9 million protocol scam, and the dismissal of over 1,000 improperly recruited personnel, highlight a troubling decline in transparency in public-sector employment.

This study utilizes Afrobarometer 2025 data and official government reports to examine the impact of recruitment irregularities on institutional legitimacy and public trust. Findings indicate that weaknesses in accountability frameworks and politically driven recruitment practices escalate perceptions of corruption, undermining public confidence in Ghana's security institutions. Recommendations include the mandatory publication of recruitment procedures, biometric verification, and enhanced parliamentary oversight.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, joining Ghana's security services symbolized opportunity and dedication to public service. However, by 2024, it became a source of widespread public anger due to allegations of corruption and political favoritism. Opposition parties accused the ruling government of covert enlistments and biased quota allocations, while the Ghana Police Service refuted these claims. Concurrently, scams proliferated, with individuals impersonating national security operatives to extort money from job seekers. The situation peaked in mid-2025 when the Ministry of the Interior dismissed over 1,000 security personnel after a review committee uncovered recruitment irregularities. According to Afrobarometer (2025) report, 63% of Ghanaians perceive police corruption, highlighting a crisis in the integrity of the public security framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Integrity in recruitment is essential for maintaining the legitimacy of public institutions (OECD, 2023). Research indicates that when employment opportunities are tainted by patronage and bribery, citizens view state institutions as biased rather than professional (Joseph Yaw Asamoah *et al.*, 2024). In Ghana, the tradition of 'protocol', which refers to politically motivated recruitment, has evolved since the post-independence era. Initially intended to promote ethnic balance, it has become a mechanism for rewarding loyalty to political

figures. Transparency International (2025) ranks Ghana 70th globally in corruption perception, with local surveys consistently identifying the police as the most corrupt institution. Comparative studies (Eugene Emeka Dim, 2025; Isaac Owusu-Mensah, 2023) reveal that corruption in recruitment undermines not only morale but also operational effectiveness, as unqualified personnel compromise service delivery.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs a qualitative policy analysis approach. Data sources include government statements, official reports from the Ministry of the Interior (2025), Afrobarometer Round 10 survey data (2024–2025), and reputable media reports from GhanaWeb, MyjoyOnline, and the Ghana News Agency. Document triangulation enhances the accuracy and consistency of findings. The analysis focuses on how recruitment practices influence public trust from an institutional governance perspective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis identifies three primary themes: (a) politicization of recruitment through 'protocol' allocations; (b) commercialization of access via bribery and fraudulent intermediaries; and (c) erosion of public trust due to inconsistent communication from authorities. Each theme is linked to administrative deficiencies in oversight and enforcement of recruitment standards.

¹ Institute of Development Studies, Africa Research University, Zambia

² Doctoral Candidate, Institute of Development Studies, Africa Research University, Zambia

* Corresponding author's e-mail: paakwesibotchwey@gmail.com

Table 1: Selected Recruitment Integrity Incidents in Ghana's Security Services, 2024–2025

Date	Agency/Actor	Incident	Integrity Issue
May 2024	Government/Party	Alleged allocation of 30 police slots per candidate	Political patronage
July 2024	Minority Parliament	Petition to CHRAJ over secret recruitment	Opaque processes
Dec 2024	National Security Operative	GHC1.93m protocol scam exposed	Bribery and impersonation
Feb 2025	Ministry of Interior	Committee to review recruitment	Institutional reform
July 2025	Interior Minister	Dismissal of over 1,000 irregular recruits	Integrity correction

Figure 1: Conceptual Model – Recruitment Integrity and Public Trust Link

Figure 1 illustrates the connections between political protocol allocations, bribery, recruitment irregularities, and public trust. Political patronage creates opportunities for bribery, leading to inconsistent recruitment outcomes that diminish public trust and heighten perceptions of corruption.

Table 2: Perceptions of Corruption by Institution, Ghana, 2024–2025 (Afrobarometer)

Institution	% Saying “Most/All” Officials Are Corrupt
Police Service	63%
Office of the Presidency	54%
Tax Officials	53%
Members of Parliament	51%
Judiciary	44%
Civil Service	39%

Source; Author, 2025

Discussion of The Table; The recruitment cycle of 2024–2025 has revealed the deep-rooted clientelism within Ghana's public security framework. Protocol allocations serve as a mechanism that allows political actors to circumvent merit-based principles.

This practice violates Article 191 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution, which guarantees equitable access to public employment. The prevalence of recruitment-related bribery highlights a troubling link between political and economic corruption, with bribes ranging from GHS 7,000 to GHS 22,000 per position.

This commodification of authority fosters distrust among citizens. Afrobarometer (2025) indicates that 74% of respondents believe corruption has increased over the past year, while 71% express fear of retaliation for reporting misconduct. As a result, a cycle of impunity and resignation persists among the populace.

Interpretation

Starting with police service with $p = 0.63$ - 63% of respondents with Odds= $0.63/(1-0.63) = 0.63/0.37 = 1.703$. this means that for every 1 person who does not think most police are corrupt, 1.7 people do think so. Log- Odds, $\ln(1.703) = 0.533$.

In logit regression it is important to use a baseline to compare everything against. We picked civil service 39% because it has the lowest corruption perception. That makes it the logical control group. For civil service $P = 0.39$ -Odd = $(0.39/0.61) = 0.630$ - Log-Odd $\ln(0.639) = -0.448$

Policy Implications

Addressing recruitment corruption requires extensive reforms. First, all security service recruitment processes should be transparently advertised, with official

Table 3: Aggregate Logit Analysis

Institution	Corruption %	Odds 1-p	Log- Odd (In Odd)
Police Service	63	1.703	0.533
Presidency +MPs	54.5	1.174	0.161
Tax and Revenue	53.25	1.128	0.121
MPs	0.51	1.041	0.040
Judiciary	0.44	0.786	-0.241
Civil Service	0.39	0.639	-0.448

Source; Author, 2025

publications detailing available positions and selection criteria. Second, both selling and buying recruitment slots must be criminalized and prosecuted under Ghana's Criminal Code. Third, biometric verification and digital cross-checks should be mandated to prevent corruption and impersonation.

Fourth, the Ministry of the Interior should present annual reports on recruitment integrity to Parliament. Lastly, decentralizing recruitment procedures can reduce elite capture by redistributing authority across regions.

The convergence of protocol, bribery, and inadequate oversight has severely undermined the credibility of Ghana's security institutions. When citizens believe that uniforms are purchased or politically allocated, trust erodes, leading to diminished cooperation with law enforcement. The recruitment cycle of 2024–2025 should signal a pivotal moment for institutional reform. By embracing transparent, technology-driven, and legally enforced recruitment systems, Ghana can restore public confidence and ensure its security services are grounded in merit and integrity, rather than monetary influence or political connections.

CONCLUSIONS

Drawing from the analysis and Harris et al, it important to state that combination of high bribery prevalence 18.4% and low public trust police trust at 28 % creates a vicious

cycle; citizens expect to pay bribes for recruitment, which further erodes trust. The use of the logit analysis helps quantify which institutions and demographics groups that are mostly affected, enabling targeted reforms.

REFERENCES

- Afrobarometer Report. (2024). *Round 10 Survey Report; Ghana. afrobarometer.org*
- Eugene Emeka Dim. (2025). *Political Transition, Structural Inequality, and the Persistence of Bribery in Ghana*.
- Ghana News Agency. (2025, June). *Ghana News Agency. gna.org.gh*
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2025). *Governance Series Waves. Report Bribery in Ghana 2024*. Ghana Statistical Services. *statighana.gov.gh*.
- Harris, D., Borcan, O., Borcan, O., Serra, D., Fasche, M., Kasianga, H., & Nketsiah. (2024). *The Impact of Ethics training on police officers in Ghana*. IZA Discussion Paper No. Institute of Labour Economics. *iza.org*.
- Isaac Owusu-Ansah. (2023). *Judicialization of Corruption in Ghana; An Analysis of How View the Office of the Special Prosecutor*.
- MyJoyOnline. (2023, November 30). *Trust In Electoral Commission Courts and Police Afrobarometer Reports*. MyJoyOnline. *myjoyonline.com*.