

**POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PEACE: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR GHANA'S PEACE ARCHITECTURE**

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**Abstract**

The paper contributes to the burgeoning argument that there exists a relationship between peace and development, and that this relationship is relevant for both political and economic governance. The pursuit of stability, peace, and security is paramount for sovereign states as they are foundational for a nation's well-being, development, and the prosperity of its citizens. Political economy of peace examines the intricate connections between economic and political factors and institutions, and the attainment of these essential objectives. Building on this conceptualisation, authors problematised peace, and hypothesised that there exists a relationship between peace, economy and politics. The paper examined this phenomenon, drawing on theoretical, conceptual and empirical perspectives. Employing exploratory study design, the paper combined in-depth interviews involving 10 participants with secondary data for the analysis. The analysis revealed that peace has become a major concern due to economic, political and ethical dilemmas in most sovereignty states, and that peace is a function of economic and political considerations.

**Keywords:** Development, Economics, Peace, Politics, Security, Stability, State, Welfare

**Introduction**

The most important pursuits of any sovereign state are peace, security and stability. The pursuits of peace, security and stability are of paramount importance for sovereign states in the global arena (Berdal & Sherman, 2010). Peace, security and stability are vital measures of national interest which deserve protection by all citizens to facilitate peaceful co-existence and growth. A

stable political and economic governance provides well-being to the citizens and non-citizens in a state. It is increasingly recognised that there exists a relationship between peace and development. A peaceful environment influences a country's developmental process. Insecurity disrupts countries and prevents the achievement of development programmes.

The political economy of peace examines the intricate relationship between economic factors, political dynamics, and the prospects for international peace and security. The political economy of peace holds practical significance for policymakers, international organisations, and the global community. Unpacking these multifaceted dynamics, strategies and policies can be developed, to not only preserve peace and security, but also advance a more just and equitable global order (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2010). Policy makers and scholars alike have turned to political and economic governance and pragmatic policies to promote peace and socio-economic development.

Scholars offer different perspectives on how states pursue their interests and engage in conflicts and peace-making (Galtung, 1969; Keohane, 1984). While realists emphasize power and security, the liberals highlight economic cooperation among nation-states as a means of promoting peace (Galtung, 1969; Keohane, 1984). However, empirical evidence drawn from real-world examples show complex relationships between peace, politics, economic factors and armed conflicts (Gartzke, 2007). The economic factors such as inequality, poverty, unemployment, and resource access have influenced politics and conflicts in various contexts (Berdal & Sherman, 2010).

The recent coup d'états, particularly in Africa, political upheavals and terrorists' attacks in other parts of the world are important cases that provide insights into political and economic governance dynamics of peace. Peace, security and stability influence a country's developmental process, and insecurity disrupts countries and hinders development. Politics and economics are interrelated, which means, ensuring national peace and security require political and economic governance stability to support the development process that leads to state welfare. It is not surprising that, all laws, legislation and constitutions are usually designed by a government and its people to achieve peace, integration and stability which are basic to national growth and prosperity of a nation-state.

Arguably, efforts by most governments towards the attainment of a secured state is continually undermined by economic and political instability. Although it is no means universally accepted, the belief is that economic and political governance benefits would transform autocratic regimes into democracies (Blackwill & Harris, 2016, p.225). For instance, Scholvin and Wigell (2018, p.73) indicated that "economic is strategic and the strategic is economic, and that peace and economic relations remain indivisible at a time when power is more often exercised in economic terms." Also, White House (2017, p.17) asserted that "economic security is national security." This suggests that the use of economic and political governance instruments for national security ends will significantly influence prospects for peace, security and stability in a nation-state (Blackwill & Harris, 2016).

However, the imposition of economic sanctions on countries which supplanted democratic rule, and are berserk in potential conflicts often appears less threatening than the use of political dialogue. Political dialogue is sometimes thought to exacerbate international tensions less. The extent to which the use of the tools of economic and political statecraft to promote peace is often unclear, and it is likely to vary depending on which specific tools are employed by modern nation-states. There is, therefore, a considerable academic literature gap between, economic, power, politics and peace. This paper problematised political economy of peace, and interrogated the relationship between peace, economy and politics in a state. It argues that there is a seemingly increased recognition of the existential relationship between peace and development, and that this relationship has both economic and political governance relevance.

### **Methodology**

The paper employed an exploratory study design, which is often designed to bring out details from the viewpoint of the participants and achieve new insights (Creswell, 2014). The paper also garnered data from both primary and secondary sources. For the primary data collection, key informants were purposively selected and interviewed. The primary data from the interviews was complemented by a review of academic journal papers, published books, policy reports, and other relevant documents. With a wide range of empirical evidence from documents, and data from purposively selected key interviewees, relevant information was gathered for this paper.

### **Political Economy of Peace**

The political economy of peace refers to the study of how economic factors, such as trade, development, and resource distribution, influence the likelihood of conflict and the prospects for peace between states (Wennmann, 2010). It encompasses both the causes of conflict related to economic issues and the potential for economic cooperation as a means to prevent or resolve conflicts. Essentially, it recognizes that economic interests and incentives are significant determinants in the pursuit of peace or conflict among nations (Wennmann, 2010).

Political economy of peace provides lenses through which scholars analyze the interplay between economics and peace. Economic interdependence is a crucial conceptual framework that highlights the mutually dependent economic relationships between states (Maoz, 2009). It posits that when countries engage in trade, investment, and other economic activities, they become more reluctant to engage in armed conflicts with their trading partners (Maoz, 2009). This framework suggests that economic cooperation and interdependence create strong incentives for peaceful relations among states. Economic interdependence contributes to the understanding of the economics of peace by illustrating how economic interests can be a powerful deterrent against conflict (Maoz, 2009). For example, European nations' economic integration through the European Union and its predecessor organizations have been credited with contributing to peace on the continent by making war less attractive due to the economic costs and disruptions it would engender.

Resource scarcity is another important framework that considers how competition for finite resources can lead to conflict. This concept acknowledges that access to essential resources, such as water, energy, and minerals, can be a source of tension among states (Obach et al, 2002). When resources become scarce or their distribution becomes uneven, conflicts may arise as countries vie for control over these valuable assets. Resource scarcity or its abundance sheds light on the economics of peace by emphasizing the role of economic factors in potential conflict triggers (Richards, 2003). For instance, disputes over access to freshwater sources have been identified as potential sources of future conflicts in regions where water resources are limited (Richards, 2003). This framework underscores the importance of resource management and cooperation in mitigating resource-related conflicts (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Soysa, 2002; Gleditsch, 1998).

Economic inequality is a framework that explores the disparities in wealth and income both within and among states. It argues that high levels of economic inequality can lead to social and political instability, which, in turn, can contribute to conflicts and violence (Coccia, 2018). Economically unequal societies are often less stable and more prone to internal strife and external aggression (Coccia, 2018). Economic inequality contributes to the understanding of the relationship between economics and peace by highlighting the importance of equitable economic development as a means of promoting stability and reducing the risk of conflict (Coccia, 2018). Policies aimed at reducing economic disparities within and among nations can contribute to peaceful relations by addressing some of the root causes of instability and grievances (Coccia, 2018).

### **Theoretical Debate**

Some theories shed light on the relationship between economic and political factors, institutions, and peace. This section explores the underlying theoretical and conceptual debates that shape the connection. In literature, theoretical perspectives on the political economy of peace can be divided into two main schools of thought, realism and liberal theories.

Realism, a dominant theory in international relations, views international politics through the lens of power and self-interest (Lott, 2018). Realists argue that states primarily seek to maximize their own security and survival in a competitive world (Lott, 2018). When applied to the political economy of peace, realism acknowledges the role of economics but emphasizes its use as a means to enhance state power. Realists contend that states may engage in economic cooperation or conflict based on the perceived gains in power and security (Lott, 2018). For example, states may form alliances or engage in trade to strengthen their positions relative to potential rivals (Lott, 2018). Conversely, they may resort to economic warfare, such as sanctions or blockades, to weaken adversaries (Lott, 2018).

Thus, the realist conception of international relations emphasizes power and security as primary motivators for states, asserting that states act in their self-interest and may use violence to achieve their goals (Galtung, 1969). The realist position explains peace in a 'lets-fight model.' It explains

that peace is achieved when a state or group of people fight for it. According to the proponents of realism, economic factors are relevant only as they contribute to a state's power and security, deterring potential aggressors (Paris, 2004). Realists conceived peace as a temporary absence of war, advocating for a constant balance of power to prevent any one state from becoming too dominant, as this could lead to conflict situation (Mearsheimer, 2001). In contrast, liberal conception of political of economy of peace highlights the potential for economic factors to promote peace by fostering interdependence between states and encouraging cooperation (Gartzke, 2007; Pew Research Center, 2019). In other words, the economic interdependence, characterised by intertwined economic relations, creates mutual interests in maintaining peace, as war disrupts economic ties (Keohane, 1984). Furthermore, democracies, which are accountable to their citizens, tend to resolve disputes peacefully, as they uphold the rule of law and protect citizens' rights (Gartzke, 2007). Empirical evidence supports liberal claims, demonstrating that economically interdependent countries are less likely to engage in armed conflict; they are more likely to seek peace by promoting economic and political stability (Gartzke, 2007). However, it is important to emphasize that factors such as strong international institutions and shared norms also contribute to peace.

Liberalism, in contrast to realism, emphasizes the potential for international cooperation and institutions to promote peace and prosperity (Haufler, 2004). Liberals argue that economic interdependence, facilitated by trade and economic integration, fosters cooperation and reduces the likelihood of conflict (Haufler, 2004). Economic institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and regional economic organizations are seen as mechanisms for conflict prevention. Liberal theorists also emphasize the role of economic development in creating stable and democratic states, which are less prone to conflict.

Constructivism posits that international relations are shaped by ideas, norms, and identities, rather than solely by material interests (Guzzini, 2004). In the context of the political economy of peace, constructivism focuses on how economic ideas and norms influence state behavior (Guzzini, 2004). For instance, the concept of economic interdependence may be perceived differently by states depending on their social and cultural contexts. Constructivists argue that economic interests are not static and can be reshaped by changing perceptions and identities (Bandelj, 2008). Constructivism in international relations emphasizes that state behaviour is shaped by ideas, norms, and identities, considering states as social actors influenced by international norms and values (Adler & Barnett, 1998; Katzenstein, 1996; Onuf, 1989; Wendt, 1992). This perspective has been applied to the study of international phenomena, such as the emergence of international institutions, the global spread of democracy, and conflict resolution. This theory highlights the significance of addressing economic inequalities as a means to reducing the likelihood of conflicts between states, and among states or intra-states (Galtung, 1967).

Institutionalism, particularly in the form of liberal institutionalism, argues that international organizations and agreements play a vital role in promoting peace. Institutions, such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and regional organizations, provide mechanisms for states to resolve disputes peacefully and cooperate on economic matters. This theory underscores the importance of creating and maintaining robust international institutions to foster peace and security (Keohane, 1984).

Also, other scholars have argued that, for economic interdependence to promote cooperation and peace, it will depend 'less' on the level of trade and 'more' on the composition of trade (i.e., whether trade is inter-industry or interindustry). Peterson and Thies (2012, p.748), for instance, hold that only "intra-industry trade is associated with lower levels of dyadic conflict." Moreover, the structures of global political economy, such as actors or locations, number and strength are the foci of theoretical developments including the new interdependence approach and analyses of (the new) complex interdependence (Farrell & Newman, 2019; Oatley, 2019). The power asymmetries inherent in political and economic governance resurrects and contextualises realist view that the global interdependence means mutual dependence, and that what matters in the end is the asymmetric political and economic power dependence. This, however, is a potential source of peace leverage, and it underscores the link between political and economic statecraft.

### **The Concept Peace, Security and Stability**

The concept of national security is considered in its broadest sense, and it concerns state peace, which means, security of persons, institutions, properties and national territory. Security is defined variously. According to Robert (1993), although security is a concept that is crucial to an understanding of international politics, it is ambiguous and elastic in its meaning. Security is, thus, the basis of human existence, and covers a very far-reaching spectrum of both human and natural events. Robert (1993) states that, traditionally, the concept of security is formulated around how states use force to manage threats to their sovereignty in respect of autonomy, territorial integrity and internal politics primarily from other states. The traditional definition of the state, on the other hand, sought to create the picture that the use of violence or the endorsement of its use in a particular territory should be imperatively a monopoly of the state. Needless to say, that many regimes in the exercise of this monopoly for the benefit of their citizens have rather used the state security apparatus as tools of oppression against their own people. For example, the international system before 1945 and during the Cold War era was marked by more inter-state conflicts, while in contemporary times, the world is dealing with a rise in intra-state conflicts. In effect, a new security concept – human security – has emerged and this has been suggested to express the notion of nationals being free from fear and want (Alagappa,1999).

Peace may simply be described as enjoyment of freedom without any interference. Cooperation, understanding, respect and absence of conflicts are important components in attaining peace and stability amongst sovereign states. State stability is hence described as a state of calmness and

order experienced by societies, states or international systems (Hanhimaki, 2008). Peace amongst sovereign states serves as a bedrock for maintaining stability, promoting cooperation and developing mutual gains and prosperity. Traditional institutions such as religious leaders, tribal councils, customary courts and village leaders serve as non-state actors who contribute significantly to preserving and maintaining peace and stability in societies by serving as mediators for conflict management resolutions. These institutions employ diverse cultural practices and knowledge inherited from their rich traditional heritage to curbing, maintaining and restoring peace in societies. Absolute peace is impossible to achieve due to differences in the sovereignty of states. However, every state focuses on attaining maximum peace. International organizations like United Nations (UN), African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) contribute to maintaining peace amongst states by enforcing law and order, which may be binding on these states and also maintaining cooperation and economic trade amongst sovereign states.

Security is one of the important aspects of international politics. The concept of security is defined as the absence of threat to core values such as peace, beliefs, identity and culture, and the ability to maintain them (Buzan, 1991). Security, in its complex sense, may be viewed as both subjective and objective. Subjective meaning of security may differ from states to states at different times based on their valued norms, beliefs, perceptions and experiences. However, security may also have an objective nature which measures certain tangible threats such as military threats that pose risk to peace to most sovereign states. The focus of every state is the protection of its national security which entails the security of its people, institutions and national borders.

### **Political Economy of Peace: Security and Stability Issues in Ghana**

#### *Inter-tribal, Chieftaincy, Religious Conflicts, or Clan Issues*

In the contemporary development lexicon, there is a clear organic link between peace and development. It is not coincidental that majority of the world's poorest countries are the least peaceful. While poverty *per se* is not a cause of conflict and violence, its existence breeds conditions for insecurity in a society in the long term. Availability of resources and the struggle to control resources are at the centre of some conflicts in some parts of the world. It should be pointed out that conflict in itself is good for change to occur as the clash of ideas is essential to expand the frontiers of knowledge (Kendie, S. 2010). Even though countries such as Ghana and many others have been described as a peaceful country, violence occurs from time-to-time, involving different kinds of protagonists. In the specific context of conflicts in Ghana, there have been various inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts in Northern Ghana over the past three decades (Mbowura & Longi, 2016; Mbowura, 2014a; Mbowura, 2014b; Mbowura, 2012). Mbowura (2014b), using the Nawuri-Gonja conflict as a case study, noted the impact of ethnic conflicts in Northern Ghana on peace, security and national development and integration in Ghana in general.

#### ***Culture of Violence Impunity***

The culture of violence refers to the system of norms, values or attitudes which allow and make possible or even stimulate the use of violence to resolve any conflict or relation with another

person. Impunity, on the other hand, refers to the exemption of those who committed unlawful acts from accountability and legal punishment (Lund, 2003). It is believed that under the culture of impunity, government officials, the police, military and ordinary citizens often break the law without fear of punishment, for there is a shared understanding that each person will be silent about the other's abuses as long as the favour is returned (Lund, 2003). In Ghana, there is apparent existence of the culture of impunity, particularly in instances of political interests. It is a common knowledge that politicians, their supporters and apparatchiks, as well as state and non-state actors sometimes used, and continue to use, threats, coercion and intimidation to achieve some goals (Alidu, 2020; Braimah, 2020). In fact, from experience over the past two decades or so, it has become a common phenomenon for a culture of impunity to sweep across Ghana anytime there is a change of government. As Braimah (2020, p. 13) noted:

Since 1992 Ghana has witnessed political violence whenever there is a change of government through voting. The recent election (December, 2016) victory of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) resulted in widespread violence against perceived political opponents ...

In general, the culture of impunity has entrenched violence against political opponents as a 'common mode' of agitation by citizens so long as the perpetrators belong to a political party in government, a situation that is likely to trigger insecurity and violence (Lund, 2003).

### ***Political Mobilization and Political Vigilantism***

In democracy, conducting competitive elections increases opportunities for generating violence through the mobilization of so-called 'machomen' and vigilante groups. Thus, in competitive election years, the competing political parties emphasize mainly on what makes them distinct from others and tend to mobilize political support along lines of differences and vigilante groups. In Africa, the competitiveness of elections has led to the proliferation of vigilante groups. Political parties mobilize the youth to form the parallel security forces. Known in literature as vigilantism, this phenomenon includes the formation of neighborhood watch groups (Hine, 1998) and paramilitary groups (Pedahzur & Perliger, 2003). The modus operandi of the vigilante groups largely gravitates towards the use of violence and impudence, use of brute force, the illegitimate appropriation of the functions of state security agencies, among others (Pedahzur & Perliger, 2003; Adinkrah, 2005; Adigwe, 2013). Generally, the activities of vigilante groups on a political landscape have led to increases in crime and disturbance of peace (Alidu, 2020; Hine, 1998; Baker, 2002). In Ghana, there are many known vigilante groups affiliated to the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) (Alidu, 2020). Some of these vigilante groups include Azorka Boys, the Hawks, the Lions, etc. of the NDC and Invincible Forces, Delta Forces, Kandahar Boys, Bamba Boys, Bolga Bulldogs, etc. of the NPP (Alidu, 2020). The activities of the vigilante groups in Ghana are well-known to be recounted here. However, it should be noted that it was the threat that the vigilante groups posed to peace and security in Ghana that led the Parliament of Ghana to pass the anti-vigilante legislation of 2019 (Act 999). Despite the ban on



political vigilantism in Ghana, there is apparent belief that political vigilante groups still exist and continue to operate in disguise, thus, posing threat to the peace and security of the country. There is also the apparent fear that the failure of state security actors to be efficient in the light of the ban of vigilantism can be catastrophic to the peace architecture of the country. As Bjarnesen (2021, p. 19) argued, "... such legal actions against non-state actors can be problematic and, in the worst case, constitute a threat to security and stability if public trust in authorities and formal state security providers is not sufficiently solid."

### ***Political Patronage***

Clientelism and patronage are considered as central parts of neo-patrimonialism as both of them involve securing political support through exchange of particular public goods and services. Under clientelism, the relationship is personal in the form of patron-client relation and the client is expected to give political support for a particular patron or politician in order to secure personal benefits such as land, office, job among others. Also, the patronage relation is more than personal as high-level politics and the clients (groups) are required to provide political support for a specific political party or a government in return for public utilities like roads, schools (Heywood, 2007). This often results in violent conflicts in the society when the later refused to honour his or her political promise to the former. In general, politicians of clientelist relation use vote buying as well as ethno-regional appeals as instruments for securing political support and victory. It is equally important to note that in patronage politics, the electorates use their votes as a means of obtaining material rewards; and as politicians favour their co-ethnic voters to secure political support, voters will also favour their co-ethnic politicians to ensure those rewards. Thus, both patrimonial and neo-patrimonial politics impacts negatively on the peace and insecurity in the democratic society. Patrimonial politics has the potential to encourage electoral violence because it marginalizes significant portions of a society, gives more emphasis to loyalty than competence, promotes corruption and neglects the rule of law. Under neo-patrimonial politics, insecurity exists relative to the character and functions of government institutions (Heywood, 2007).

One of the obvious manifestations of clientelism on the political landscape in Africa is vote buying. Scholars have rationalized the prevalence of vote buying in elections. Vote buying enhances party loyalty (Bratton, 2008), stabilizes party support base (Gans-Morse, Mazzuca & Nichter, 2009), influences voter turnouts (Cox & McCubbins, 1986), makes the electorate to feel that a particular candidate is in touch with them (Nugent, 2007). Despite these rationalizations, vote buying portends danger to democracy, peace and security (Chukwurah, 2019; Bratton, 2008). It is common knowledge that vote buying is quite high on the electoral landscape in Ghana, and its saturation can trigger electoral disputes and violence that could affect Ghana's peace architecture.

### ***Deteriorating Economic Conditions***

The high dependency ratio leads to poverty and economic inequality of families and citizens. Poverty gets worse when people cannot get employment, forcing them to join violent or extremist

groups to unleash violence for economic gain (Omwega, Role and Ndiku, 2016; Abdikadir, 2016). In such cases, it becomes difficult for unemployed persons to seek education and training to get adequate nutrition and obtain adequate medical care. Increased poverty further increases the number of people, who live in slums, and importantly, increases the unemployment rate, and the desire of the unemployed to remit their families back home often pushes them to engage in social vices such as armed robbery and 'galamsey.' Thus, the excessive economic inequality and corruption have the tendency to produce high levels of discontent and clear grievances among marginalised groups in a democratic society. High levels of economic inequality often go hand-in-hand with unemployment among youths feeling disenfranchised, who are susceptible to recruitment into armed groups with the intent of fomenting violence or threatening opponents in the society (Canterbury & Kendie, 2010). Particularly, the demographic composition of the youth is growing at an astronomical rate, and is inversely related to the availability of employment opportunities in the region. It is estimated that about 70% of the population of Africa is made up of the youth (Abdikadir, 2016). It is further estimated that labour market receives between 10 and 12 million entrants annually, with the market being able to absorb only about 3.7 million (Abdikadir, 2016). The implication is that the unemployment rate in Africa is quite high. Many of these unemployed young men and women live under very precarious situations, and are economically marginalized (Abdikadir, 2016). The despicable unemployment rate, coupled with the deplorable economic situations the unemployed youth in Africa face, makes them susceptible to recruitment into radicalized groups such as terrorist and vigilante networks and other criminal gangs (Omwega, Role, and Ndiku, 2016; Abdikadir, 2016). In short, the rate of unemployment poses a severe security threat to Africa because the unemployed youth are likely to be hired to engage in non-economic activities such as robbery and violence attacks in return for pittance to make a living in the society.

### ***Weak State Institutions, political Interference, Corruption***

Law enforcement and institutional efficiency are central to peace, security and stability in a state. Weak institutions and apparent lack of justice can trigger conditions and activities that are likely to encroach on the architecture of peace in a state (Kucera & Mares, 2015). Similarly, apparent or perceived biases of the justice system in a state can stimulate and propel violence that might compromise the peace, security and stability of a state (Adémo, 2017; Adigwe, 2013). In particular reference to the police service, lack of public trust in the institution can be cataclysmal to peace (Dowler & Sparks, 2008; Skogan, 2009; Bradford, 2011). Lack of public trust in the capacity of the police institution to ensure peace, law and order is contingent on a number of variables – experiences of the public in the hands of the police, competencies of the police, police professionalism, among others, (Skogan, 2006; Newburn, 1999). Other variables responsible for the weakness of the police institution in the maintenance of law and order are the “lack of consistent standards and harmonized training” (Caparini & Livingstone, 2014: 5) and “the issue of weak logistical and equipment provisioning” (Caparini & Livingstone, 2014: 4). In the face of

the weakness of the police institution, it is questionable whether the presence of the police institution is a panacea to security threats in a state (Aleyomi, 2013).

In Ghana, lack of public trust in the police institution's discharge of its duties to ensure peace, law and order is quite high (Tankebe, 2008; Boateng, 2012, 2013 & 2015; Braimah & Mbowura, 2014). In the view of Boateng (2015, p. 2), "in a post-colonial society like Ghana where crime and fear of crime may be high, the competency of the police to curtail the occurrence of these incidents may play a major role in shaping their attitudes toward the police. Ghanaians' sense of the ability of the police to prevent crime and ensure personal security everywhere in their communities will inform their thinking that the police are trustworthy." In the view of Adubofour (2017: 6), "Ghanaians perceive the police as lacking political impartiality and that this correlates with low public trust and confidence in the police. These then were associated with low perceptions of police legitimacy." Braimah and Mbowura (2014, p. 1) share a similar view when they argued that the "image of the Ghana Police Service has had negative repercussions on public understanding of its professionalism and the institutionalization of policing in communities in Ghana." As far as the political economy of peace, security and stability of Ghana is concerned, the "lack of proper equipment/logistics, lack of infrastructure, inadequate number of instructors, lack of motivation of instructors, interference in the recruitment process from top-level management, low level of technology, and poor maintenance culture were identified" are some of the variables that make the Ghana Police Service weak in the discharge of its functions (Mensah & Frimpong, 2020: 86). In short, the weakness of the police service is a danger to peace, security and stability in Ghana and many other African states.

### **Enhancing Political Economy of Peace, Security and Stability in Ghana**

This study sought to establish pathways to deal with the social, political and economic variables that presumably threaten or lay foundations for the emergence of conditions that threaten peace, security and stability in Ghana from the perspective of respondents. In response to survey questions about the pathways to enhance political economy of peace, security and stability in Ghana, respondents made a number of suggestions.

#### ***Political Will and Commitment***

From the analysis of respondents chosen for this study, it was clear that the state plays a major role in curbing inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts in Ghana. Nine out of ten respondents think that enhancing political economy of peace, security and stability in Ghana is a function of political will and commitment. According to respondents, the Government of Ghana, through the state authorities, traditional council and national peace council, national and the Regional Houses of Chiefs, should put in place initiatives to address the problem of intral-ethnic, chieftaincy, religious conflicts, or clan issues in the country. The Government should take major initiatives to eradicate the conflicts by passing special legislations to punish offenders.

### ***The Role of Non-governmental and civil Society in Peace and Security Building***

In the view of seven respondents, enhancing political economy of peace, security and stability in Ghana is not the sole responsibility of the state and its institutions; non-governmental organizations also play a key role. According to informants, civil society organizations and non-governmental organisations should play an important role in the peace and security effort and architecture in Ghana. This should take the form of the promotion of education to promote awareness about preventive measures in relation to threats to peace and security, as well as create awareness about security implications in relation to the rehabilitation of released victims in the society, poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, the NGOs, in particular, should intensify their efforts in the promotion of self-help-groups to the youth; they must also intensify their advocacies and social mobilization efforts for the elimination of ethnic, chieftaincy and religious violence and conflicts in Ghana.

### ***Promoting Strong Institutions and Security System***

A state needs strong national security institutions to maintain law, peace and security. Respondents were of the view that the police institution and all other institutions tasked with the maintenance of peace, law and order in Ghana should be adequately resourced to carry out their functions. Similarly, all the security agencies, including the appointments of security heads in Ghana should be de-politicised. This would go a long way to ensuring the sanctity and efficiency of the security services in the country. Furthermore, respondents proffered that, the institutional capacity of the security services, particularly the police service in Ghana, would be enhanced if periodic comprehensive workshop and refresher training programmes are organized for them. The aggregate effects of these efforts would make the police service extremely professional and robust capable of upholding peace and maintaining law and order in Ghana.

### ***Economic Equality and Youth employment***

According to informants, the institutionalization of political measures to enhance political economy of peace, security and stability in Ghana is meaningless if the efforts are not replicated in the economic field. Given that youth unemployment makes the youth susceptible to criminal acts and enlistment into terrorist and vigilante groups (Alidu, 2020; Alidu & Mohammed, 2020), it is expedient that concerted measures are taken to solve the youth unemployment menace in Ghana. As one informant puts it, “the Government of Ghana should take pragmatic steps in a short-to-long-term in addressing the unemployment problem in the country. By creating gainful employment opportunities for the youth, the Government of Ghana would be able to reduce the unemployment rate, and invariably, it would succeed in fighting the consequential effects of youth unemployment to peace, security and stability in Ghana” (Informant, personal communication, September 13, 2023). In short, the institutionalization of employment opportunities for the youth would contribute in reducing youth patronage of or involvement in illegal activities for economic gains.

### ***Training of Security Personnel***

Scholars have shown that there is a positive correlation between technology and the efficiency of state security services (Tombull & Cakar, 2015; Bryne & Marx, 2011). In specific respect to the police service, studies have shown that police professionalism in relation to enhancing political economy of peace, security and stability could be propped if the police service is equipped with the appropriate and modern technologies (Tombull & Cakar, 2015; 2015; Bryne & Marx, 2011). In line with Adoptive Structuration Theory (AST) that “addresses issues of human behaviour in the context of technology based on social structure (Sedera & Zakaria, 2008: 3), respondents argued that the architecture of the political economy of peace, security and stability in Ghana would be enhanced positively if the police service and other security agencies are equipped with up-to-date equipment that would facilitate an efficient execution of their functions and fight against crime in order to main peace and security. According to respondents, the security agencies should not only be equipped with modern security-related technologies, but should also be trained in the efficient use and application of them to maintain of peace and security in Ghana.

### ***Cooperation among Political Parties***

Respondents hold the view that peace in Ghana on the political landscape is key to the peace, security and stability of the country as whole. Given that the governance architecture in Ghana is duopolistic, there is generally intense competition between the two leading political parties – the NDC and the NPP. In many instances, the supporters of these political parties clash over political differences. There is also a perceived political standoff in parliament between the Members of the NDC and the NPP. National issues are mostly politicized and taken out of context by NDC and NPP apparatchiks. The rivalries between the two political parties often threaten peace and raise security concerns. To create strong pillars for peace, security and stability in Ghana, respondents hold the view that collaborations between the NDC and the NPP should be enhanced. Any attempt by either of the political parties in power to destroy the other would cause serious security implications that could endanger peace in Ghana.

### **Conclusion**

This paper studied political economy of peace, and examined the relationship between economics, politics and peace. It argued that that peace is a function of economic and political considerations. The paper delineated the scope, theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of political economy of peace. It posited that political economy of peace is a function of a number of factors. The paper identified the varied social, political and economic variables that shape and determine political economy of peace in Ghana in particular and Africa in general. Some of the variables included local conflicts, the culture of impunity, political mobilization, political patronage, deteriorating economic conditions, weak and corrupt state institutions, and political vigilantism. The extent of the operationalization of any of the variables or a combination of them might trigger localized or general insecurity and disturbance of peace in Ghana. The paper concluded that, enhancing political economy of peace, security and stability, hinges on a number of factors. The extent and

nature of peace, security and stability in Ghana is a function of the prudent operationalization these 'enhancing factors.'

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