

**TOPIC**

**THE POLITICAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF GENDER ROLES IN SECURITY  
AGENCIES: THE GHANA ARMED FORCES IN PERSPECTIVE**

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**(10807518)**



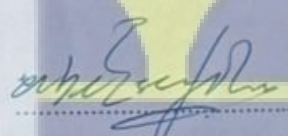
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LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE  
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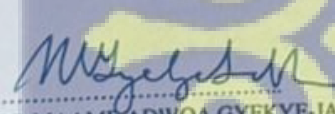
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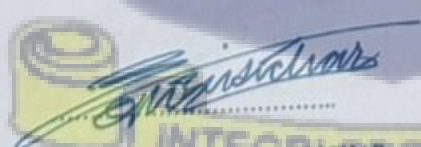
**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that, the research **THE POLITICAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF GENDER ROLES IN SECURITY AGENCIES: THE GHANA ARMED FORCES IN PERSPECTIVE** is my own work and that the sources of secondary information used or cited have been acknowledged by means of complete references. This thesis has never been presented either in whole or part to any institution for the award of any degree.

  
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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God Almighty who is my source of inspiration and to my family Mr Kwesi Nyamekye Manu, Mrs Augustina Aframmea Manu, Prof Emmanuel Manu, Mrs Maureen Taylor, Ms Yvonne Manu, Dr Stephen Manu, Ms Shirley Manu and Ms Jacqueline Afia Nyarko for their love and support.



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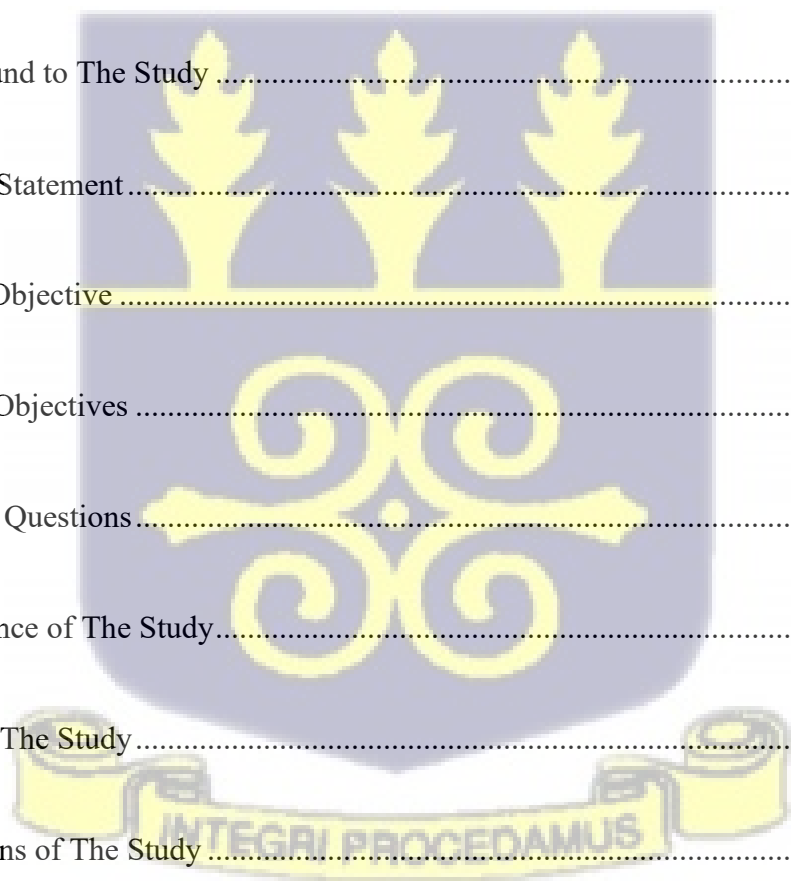
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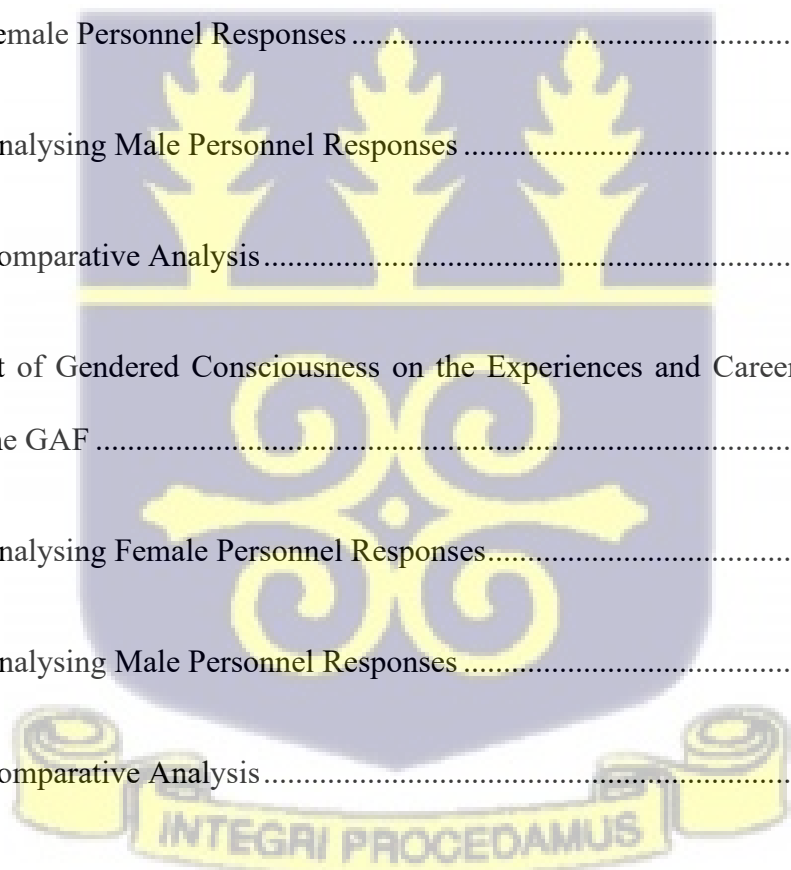


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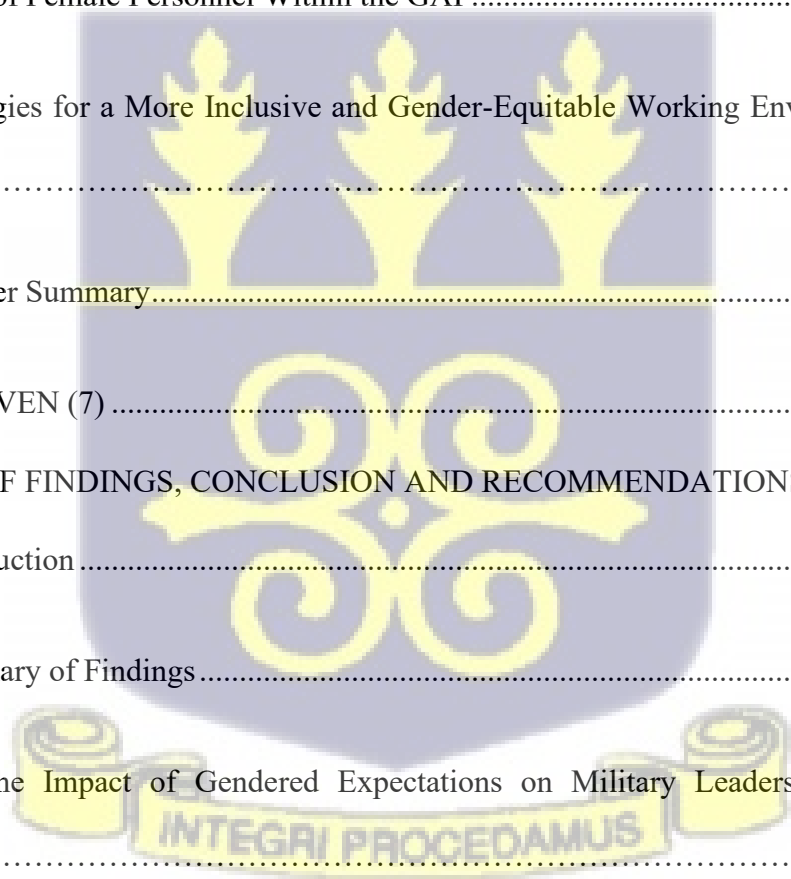
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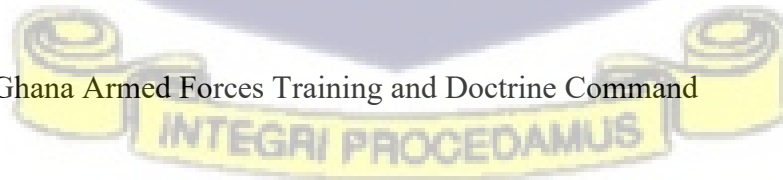
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Army HQ	Ghana Army Headquarters
CDS	Chief of the Defence Staff
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration
ECH	Ethical Committee for Humanities
EIF	Elsie Initiative Foundation
GAF	Ghana Armed Forces
GAFCS	Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College,
GMA	Ghana Military Academy
JTB	Justified True Belief
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
NHQ	Ghana Navy Headquarters
ORID	Office of Research Innovation and Development
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TRADOC	Ghana Armed Forces Training and Doctrine Command
UN	United Nation
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security



This study investigates the experiences of female personnel within the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), focusing on how they negotiate their professional identities and challenge traditional gender norms. Guided by the Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism theories, the research explores the intersection of gender dynamics and military culture. Through qualitative analysis, the study examines official GAF pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses, highlighting the pervasive influence of traditional gender norms and the mechanisms through which they are perpetuated. The findings reveal that female personnel within the GAF navigate a complex landscape where institutional structures and societal expectations shape their professional experiences. Despite facing significant barriers and gender biases, these women exhibit agency and reflexivity in challenging hegemonic discourses and asserting their competence and leadership capabilities. The study uncovers the persistence of gender-based challenges, such as skepticism and discrimination from male colleagues, and highlights the limitations of individual agency in overcoming entrenched power dynamics. Furthermore, the research identifies context-specific nuances unique to the Ghanaian military environment, emphasizing the influence of broader societal norms and cultural expectations on the construction of gender identities. The experiences of female personnel reflect both the resistance against and the negotiation with traditional gender norms, contributing to a deeper understanding of gender dynamics within military institutions.

Overall, this study underscores the need for comprehensive institutional reforms and cultural shifts to promote gender equality and inclusivity within the GAF. It calls for targeted interventions that address systemic gender inequalities and support the empowerment of female personnel in military settings. By providing valuable insights into the experiences of women in the GAF, this research contributes to the broader discourse on gender and military culture, informing efforts to create more equitable and inclusive Armed Forces.

## CHAPTER ONE (1)

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the study's background, research problem, purpose, research aims, research questions, survey relevancy, and overall study organisation. The chapter concludes with definitions of keywords. Globally, women's participation in national militaries has increased significantly since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and its follow-up frameworks (UN Women, 2023). In Ghana, women were formally admitted into the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) in 1979, yet as of 2024, they constitute less than 10% of total personnel and remain scarce in combat and command roles (Markwei et al., 2023; MoGCSP, 2023). While legal barriers to enlistment no longer exist, de facto institutional and cultural barriers persist as evidenced by stalled promotions, exclusion from operational assignments, and reports of gender-based harassment (Aning et al., 2021; Dery & Ampomah, 2020).

This study responds to an empirical gap which opines that although gender in the security sector has been studied in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya, no phenomenological study has examined how GAF women experience, interpret and resist gendered structures in their daily professional lives. Existing Ghanaian literature focuses on policy analysis (Boateng, 2018) or descriptive statistics (MoGCSP, 2022), but neglects the lived, embodied realities of servicewomen.

## 1.1 Background to The Study

Throughout history, the field of security has predominantly been occupied by men, as noted by Eichler (2015). The occupation of security has been traditionally associated with male characteristics such as power, assertiveness, and courage (Eichler, 2015). However, there is a growing presence of women in public security agencies worldwide, including the military, police, and other para-military services which is gradually challenging this norm (Heinecken, 2016). The gendered stratification within the security industry carries significant implications. Firstly, it perpetuates stereotypical beliefs that women are incapable of performing certain jobs solely based on their gender. Secondly, it limits their opportunities for advancement in higher-paying and more prestigious professions. Thirdly, it constrains women's access to job prospects and opportunities. Moreover, due to their limited responsibilities and minority status, women have limited influence over decision-making processes that affect their well-being.

In Ghana, despite formal inclusion since 1979, women in the GAF continue to face structural and cultural marginalization. As of 2024, only three female Brigadier Generals had served in GAF history, and women remain underrepresented in leadership, operational deployments, and decision-making forums (KAIPTC, 2018; Markwei et al., 2023). This is not due to official exclusion, women are legally eligible for all roles but rather de facto barriers that are embedded in institutional culture, promotion systems, and everyday practices (Dery & Ampomah, 2020).

Globally, research shows that mere numerical inclusion does not guarantee equity. In male-dominated institutions like the military but women often encounter skepticism about their competence, harassment, and exclusion from informal networks that drive career advancement (Heinecken, 2022; von Hlatky & Imre-Millei, 2022). In the GAF, these

dynamics are compounded by the patriarchal societal norms that associate leadership and physical resilience with masculinity (Ilesanmi, 2021; Aning et al., 2021).

Critically, existing studies on the GAF are policy-focused or statistical documentations of representation rates or quoting official gender-equality pronouncements but they are not centred on the subjective, lived experiences of servicewomen (Boateng, 2018; MoGCSP, 2022). For example, while the Elsie Initiative and National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (2018-2022) exist on paper, female personnel report limited awareness or access to these programs (Markwei et al., 2023).

Gender refers to *the social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and to the relationships between women and men, girls, and boys, as well as to the relations between women and those between men* (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2021). *These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes. They are context and time-specific, and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed, and valued in a woman or a man in each context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. There is an imbalanced allocation of social power and agency in favour of men* (Erickson-Schroth & Davis, 2021). The rules that dictate what is proper for girls and what is proper for boys are becoming fluid and less straight-forward. Gendered roles are experienced in several institutions across the globe. The workplace is not seen as the primary area of women; career and professional advancement is unimportant for women (Trobaugh, 2018). Security agencies are classical patriarchal institutions which perpetuate the stereotypical roles of women as subordinates

of men (Trobaugh, 2018) and women are theoretically perceived to be politically or ideologically passive (Mirkin, 1984; Sultana, 2010).

This study will therefore focus more on women when looking at the gendered roles in the security services of Ghana, specifically the GAF in perspective. There are two consequences to this gendered division of labour. Women are either relegated to low-risk jobs rather than those requiring a gender perspective, or they are pressured to integrate into this masculine culture to be considered capable (Heinecken, 2015). In any case, this influences their capacity to shift the male organisational culture that alienates women and fosters aggressive tendencies (Kreft, 2017). To modify the prevailing prejudices that make significant contributions to their marginalisation, they need to achieve a saturation point (Heinecken, 2015). As a result, Kreft (2017) contends that if enough tokens join coalitions, they may change the prevailing culture. When viewed in the context of Ghana's security services, Kreft's theory indicates that if enough women work within the GAF, they may collectively alter the perspective. Nevertheless, whereas more women are needed to modify gender binaries, this alone will not reform gendered institutions. This is because, to thrive, women must instead compromise their femininity and adopt patriarchal forms of masculinity. When women confront this, they are frequently greeted with opposition from their male colleagues (Heinecken, 2016). As a result, gender mainstreaming programmes must strive to promote women's involvement while also changing organisational attitudes and policies that contribute to inequity (Debusscher & Hulse, 2014).

Men and women are opposites in terms of their behaviour, features, and capacities, according to biological determinism reasoning. These are frequently considered to be inextricably tied to their biological sex (Gericke, et al., 2016). As a result, males are thought to be masculine and women to be feminine. Significantly, the characteristics

associated with men and women are seen to be complementary yet antagonistic, with males possessing the attributes that women lack and vice versa (Heilman, 2012). Such impressions are manifested in societal conceptions of sex and gender roles, which govern what is recognized and appreciated in men and women, based on the circumstances in terms of their masculinity and femininity (Ensor, 2018). As a result, men and women are classed as more suited to various responsibilities in business and at home.

More than a century ago, the battle for women's rights and gender equality started (Shelley et al., 2011). Gender equality is a global initiative that strives to elevate the value of women's labour. Since then, policies such as the Equal Opportunity Employment Act has played an important role in assisting women to enter the military profession. Women are now the primary breadwinners in four out of every ten households and acquire more college degrees than men (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2012). Despite the significant accomplishments women have made to the labour force, acceptance by their male colleagues remains a difficulty. Women continue to be allowed admission into fields where males predominate, sometimes by mandates. However, once they arrive, institutional hurdles are put in place, and women are rarely given opportunities for growth or advancement (Rai, 2017). Given such prevalence, others may know a woman working in a male-dominated profession who has experienced this problem.

While the number of women participating in security provision is still marginal when compared to men, UN Resolution 1325 has placed pressure on the international inclusion of more women within public security institutions such as the military (Heinecken, 2016). However, unlike public security institutions like the GAF, there appears to be little political pressure or policy driving inclusion and gender equality.

In the 1980s, the traditionally male-dominated area of law enforcement started to recognise the existence of women. The majority of female security personnel research has concentrated on the advancement of women in the security sector, impediments, gender discrimination, perceptions, why women are discouraged from entering the profession, physical limitations, instruments used during the recruitment process, and the stress endured after entry into the profession (Arostegui, 2015; Woolsey, 2010). As a result, realistic assessments of women's experiences in the security industry may be restricted due to significant female employee turnover and low recruiting numbers. Even though women are equally competent of executing most security tasks, inequity in recruiting efforts and selection methods discourage women from entering the field (Arostegui, 2015). It is also necessary to investigate the impediments that impact female employees' work performance, retention, and recruiting. Burke and Mikkelsen (2005), for example, proposed that hurdles such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and equality are recurring issues made by female Officers who attempt to question established policies and procedures (Angehrn et al., 2021). Women continue to face challenges in gaining full acceptability into the military. Furthermore, one of the main concerns of female officers is peer acceptance and being perceived as competent officers (Woolsey, 2010).

Gender disparity in patriarchal organizations lead to women's subordination and accentuates their precarious circumstances (Altay, 2019). As a result, analysing female military personnel opinions is critical to correctly represent women's contributions to the security profession. The research regularly documents women's sentiments of isolation and lack of access to mentors (Hassell et al., 2011; Shelley et al., 2011). Previous studies relied primarily on men's opinions of assistance and failed to take women's viewpoints into account. Exploring women's positions in the security profession is critical since women are significantly underrepresented and the number of women joining the field

looks to be stagnating (Diaz & Nuño, 2021). Examining the job satisfaction of female officers might provide light on why there is still a lack of female participation in the field as well as the impact of gendered roles in the GAF.

Similarly, examining years of experiences may give light on why certain officers are promoted while others are not. Finally, because female officer retention remains a concern, mentorship is an important component to investigate. Hassell et al. (2011) evaluated male and female officers' working experiences and discovered that mentorship increased integration, career advancement, and female officer solidarity. During the first training session, new employees are frequently paired with a seasoned officer. A formal long-term mentorship programme for female personnel may be advantageous to their overall career success.

The preponderance of female security personnel research emphasises on marginalisation. According to Reckdenwald and Parker (2008), the importance of marginalisation emphasises women's disadvantageous position in the labour market, at home, and in families. The study of female staff marginalisation yielded few research (Alm & Guttormsen, 2021). Most of the studies focuses on how marginalisation affects females and hurdles to female inclusion in the security profession (Chu et al., 2021). Women may face inequitable treatment because male security officers regard them as a vulnerability. While there is a large amount of research on gender and gendered work in private institutions, there is less material on the gendered aspect of employment in the GAF (Woodward & Duncanson, 2017).

This gap is significant. Without understanding how women interpret, navigate, and resist gendered structures through their own words and narratives, policy reforms risk remaining symbolic rather than transformative. As Ampofo (2019) notes, Ghanaian feminist security

scholarship must move beyond descriptive accounts to phenomenological depth that captures agency within constraint.

This study therefore focuses on the political phenomenology of gender roles in the GAF, exploring how institutional discourses, recruitment practices, boot camp (initial 6 - 9 months training at Ghana Military Academy or various Recruits Training Schools), and daily interactions shape women's professional identity, career trajectories and strategies of resistance. It responds directly to the absence of first-person, qualitative research on GAF women and fills a critical gap in African feminist military studies.

Considering this brief background, the purpose of this study is to investigate the gendered roles specifically of women in the GAF, as well as the challenges they encounter in their duties as security personnel.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Researchers have mostly concentrated on gendered roles, as well as work performance and capacities in the public sector. Afram (2011) focused on gender and the GAF, an examination of women's integration and operational effectiveness which concluded that women are not operationally effective especially in combat roles within the service. Amevi (2023) also focused on the roles women play in peacekeeping. There is a widespread belief that the number of female security officers remains low due to a scarcity of suitable applicants. However, women continue to confront internal and external barriers in their quest for equality in the security field (White, 2020). These structures of consciousness of career women embedded in the security services shapes their quest for agency. Despite an abundance of support and advice from female social and mentoring organisations, few women have achieved higher position.

Furthermore, women have not experienced the same levels of promotion as men, and the brass ceiling established by their past exclusion from certain posts in the security services has limited their opportunities for advancement as compared to men (Baker, 2014; Dichter & True, 2015). As a result, these variables may create an environment that discourages women from serving in the security services for an extended period (Dichter & True, 2015), potentially leading to future disparities in the total number of women in the GAF as well as professional development limitations.

A deficit in the current literature on gendered roles in security services prompted this study. The nature of gendered discourses and the consequences of armed sub-state actors, such as peacekeepers, have been investigated (Beber et al 2016; Karim & Beardsley 2013). Similarly, research on other security-related apparatuses, such as security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR), has been done (Kunz 2014). These scholarly investigations influenced several policies and interventions targeted at addressing possible gendered consequences (DDR, 2012). However, no comparable research has been undertaken in Ghana on gendered roles in the GAF. The recent changes in the workforce demographics may assist leaders of the GAF and policymakers in developing policies and procedures that are supportive of women, provide opportunities for advancement, and take their family responsibilities into consideration. In addition, given the existing gender imbalance in the security services and the dearth of literature on this topic, in the context of Ghana, this study sets out to explore the gendered roles in the security sector of Ghana, the GAF in perspective.

Despite Ghana's ratification of international gender-equality instruments including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the GAF remains a male-dominated institution

where systemic, de facto barriers which are not official exclusion shape women's professional lives.

First, there are no legal or official barriers to women's enlistment in the GAF. Women have been formally admitted since 1979 and serve in all branches (Markwei et al., 2023; MoGCSP, 2023). However, as of 2024, they constitute less than 10% of total personnel and remain scarce in combat and command roles (Dery & Ampomah, 2020; Aning et al., 2021).

Second, evidence confirms women face significant de facto barriers, including:

- Promotion Bias: Only three female Brigadier Generals in GAF history (KA IPTC, 2018; Markwei et al., 2023).
- Exclusion from Leadership Pipelines: Women are often assigned to "softer" roles (e.g., education, health), limiting access to career-enhancing operational experience (Dery & Ampomah, 2020).
- Hostile Institutional Culture: Reports of gender-based harassment, skepticism about pregnant commanding officers, and assumptions that women lack leadership capacity (Markwei et al., 2023).

Third, a critical research gap exists, while gender in the security sector has been studied in South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya, no phenomenological study has examined how Ghanaian servicewomen subjectively experience, interpret, and resist gendered structures in their daily professional lives. Existing Ghanaian research focuses on policy analysis (Boateng, 2018) or descriptive statistics (MoGCSP, 2022), but neglects the lived, embodied realities of GAF women.

This raises the central problem: How do gendered power structures within the GAF shape women's professional identity, agency, and career trajectories and how do they navigate or resist these structures?

### 1.3 General Objective

The main objective of the study was to explore the political phenomenology of gender roles in the GAF through the lived experiences of female personnel. It ascertained the structure of consciousness and the agential strategies of career women embedded in the GAF.

### 1.4 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to.

1. How do official GAF pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses construct and perpetuate gender roles?
2. How do GAF recruitment practices, boot camp experiences, and everyday interactions shape gendered consciousness?
3. How do female personnel negotiate professional identities and challenge traditional gender norms?
4. How do gendered power dynamics influence promotion and career progression?
5. What institutional reforms could foster gender equity?

### 1.5 Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following research questions.

1. How do official GAF pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses construct and perpetuate gender roles?
2. How do GAF recruitment practices, boot camp experiences, and everyday interactions shape gendered consciousness?
3. How do female personnel negotiate professional identities and challenge traditional gender norms?
4. How do gendered power dynamics influence promotion and career progression?
5. What institutional reforms could foster gender equity?

### **1.6 Significance of The Study**

This study holds significant theoretical, empirical, and policy-oriented value for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers engaged in gender, security, and military studies particularly in the Global South.

Theoretically, the research makes a critical contribution to African feminist security studies by centering the lived experiences of Ghanaian servicewomen within a phenomenological framework. Unlike much of the existing literature which relies on Western liberal feminist models or policy analysis, this study employs the Theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism to interrogate how ideology, institutional discourse, and everyday interaction co-constitute gendered realities in a non-Western military context. In doing so, it challenges the assumed universality of “gender mainstreaming” and demonstrates how local cultural logics, postcolonial legacies, and militarized masculinity shape women’s professional agency in ways that cannot be captured by imported frameworks.

Empirically, the study fills a glaring phenomenological gap in the Ghanaian and West African literature. While scholars like Markwei et al. (2023), Dery & Ampomah (2020), and Aning et al. (2021) have documented structural inequalities in the GAF through surveys and policy reviews, no prior study has explored how women subjectively interpret, navigate, and resist these structures. By foregrounding twenty-four (24) in-depth narratives, this research gives voice to a marginalized cohort whose experiences have been absent from academic and policy discourse. The findings reveal not only the mechanisms of exclusion through GAF pronouncements, boot camp design, and promotion logics but also the strategic agency women exercise through mentorship, performance armour, and everyday resistance.

Practically, the study offers evidence-based, context-specific recommendations for the GAF, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), and international partners like the Elsie Initiative Foundation. At a time when Ghana is positioning itself as a leader in UN peacekeeping and regional security, gender equity in its own ranks is not just a moral imperative but an operational necessity. As UN Women (2023) and the KAIPTC (2018) have shown, militaries that integrate gender perspectives perform better in peace operations, build greater community trust, and enhance force protection. This study provides actionable strategies including gender-audited physical standards, mandatory sensitivity training, and functional Gender Desks at all garrison levels that can move the GAF from symbolic compliance to systemic reform.

The research advances methodological innovation by demonstrating how phenomenology can be productively combined with critical gender theory to study opaque, hierarchical institutions. In a field often dominated by positivist metrics (e.g., “number of women

promoted”), this study proves that deep qualitative inquiry is essential to understanding why gender inequality persists and how it might be undone.

It would also guide policy makers in devising or enhancing legal provisions and support to enhance enlistment or recruitment, participation, and deployment of women in the security services. The research will test the theoretical validity of the “passive woman” assumption in the context of the closed or opaque world of career women embedded in security agencies which would go a long way to put security sector gender studies in Ghana on the epistemic map of phenomenology.

### **1.7 Scope of The Study**

Given the vastness of gender and security studies, this research deliberately narrows its focus to female personnel in the GAF with three or more years of service. This criterion ensures that participants have accumulated sufficient professional experiences to reflect meaningfully on institutional culture, career trajectories, and gendered dynamics. The study draws data from three key Garrisons namely Burma Camp (Accra), Tamale, and Takoradi, representing the Army, Navy, and Air Force branches and capturing geographic and service-branch diversity. While the findings are not generalizable in a statistical sense, they offer analytical depth and contextual richness that can inform similar institutions across West Africa. The research does not examine other security agencies (e.g., Police, Prisons) or male-only experiences, as its central aim is to centre women’s subjectivity in a male-normed institution.

### **1.8 Limitations of The Study**

To begin with, considering qualitative research takes place in a natural context, it may be challenging to repeat the study. Furthermore, the applicability of this study's results may

be unknown because additional research may be required to confirm whether the findings apply to people in comparable organizations.

Although the study is based on primary data, secondary data has been analysed to authenticate and validate the source data. Due to national security considerations, it was often difficult to acquire sufficient information because there are very few publications and research done explicitly in the field of career development and gender analysis of women in the GAF.

The main drawback of this study was locating enough persons in the demographic category ready to discuss their opinions of GAFs equal-opportunity system. A lack of contemporary scholarly works on the phenomenological experiences of gendered roles in the security services in Ghana was another barrier.

The GAF's secrecy made conducting a comprehensive study impossible. Access constraints imposed by the GAF's culture of secrecy limited the pool of willing participants. While twenty-four (24) participants (14 females, 10 males) were interviewed, sufficient for phenomenological saturation, reached at participant #22, the sample is not representative of the entire GAF. Here, the small number of participants may not provide an accurate picture of the situation, therefore the findings cannot be applied to all female personnel in the GAF. Some of the conclusions may be skewed because they are based on participants own experiences.

All interviews were conducted in English, the GAF's official language, which may have excluded non-fluent speakers or obscured nuances lost in translation. The study also reflects institutional realities as of 2023-2024; ongoing reforms (e.g., new Gender Desk protocols) may shift these dynamics in the future. Finally, while member checking and

peer debriefing enhanced validity, the researcher's positionality as a Ghanaian woman with professional ties to the security sector necessitated rigorous reflexivity and bracketing to mitigate bias. These limitations, however, do not undermine the study's trustworthiness; rather, they reflect the ethical and practical realities of researching closed institutions.

## 1.9 Organization of The Study

The thesis is structured into seven chapters, each building logically on the last:

- Chapter One establishes the background, problem statement, objectives, and significance of the study.
- Chapter Two reviews global and Ghana-specific literature on gender in security, identifying the phenomenological gap this research addresses.
- Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework, justifying the use of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism as complementary lenses.
- Chapter Four details the phenomenological methodology, including sample size ( $n = 24$ ), data collection, and analytical procedures.
- Chapter Five presents inductive findings, organized around the five research objectives, with verbatim participant quotes.
- Chapter Six offers a theoretical discussion, interpreting findings through the dual-theory framework.
- Chapter Seven summarizes key insights, draws logical conclusions, and proposes six evidence-based recommendations.

This structure ensures coherence, rigor, and narrative flow from problem to policy.

### 1.10 Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity on issues concerning measurement in this study, the researcher explained key concepts that may have different meanings across various situations. The following terms have been operationalized for this study.

- **GAF Pronouncements:** Official public statements, policy addresses, and media releases issued by GAF leadership, particularly speeches made by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) at events such as Armed Forces Day, durbars and others. In this study, “GAF pronouncements” refer to institutional discourses that shape norms, values, and gendered expectations within the military.
- **Boot Camp:** The initial 6-9- or 15-18-months military training program conducted at the Ghana Military Academy (GMA) for all new cadets and recruits at the various Recruit Training Schools. “Boot camp” in this research denotes a critical site of gendered socialization, where physical standards, disciplinary practices, and peer dynamics often reflect and reinforce masculine ideals.
- **Participants:** Individuals who took part in in-depth interviews for this study. The term “participants” is used throughout the thesis to reflect the active, agentic role of participants in qualitative phenomenological research. The outdated term “respondents” has been removed entirely.
- **Phenomenological Saturation:** The point in data collection at which no new themes or insights emerge from additional interviews. In this study, saturation was reached at Participant no. 22, with two additional interviews conducted for confirmation, resulting in a total of 24 participants.
- **Gendered Power Dynamics:** The systemic patterns through which institutional structures, promotion practices, and informal networks privilege male personnel

and constrain the authority, mobility, and recognition of female personnel in the GAF.

- **Agency:** The capacity of female personnel to interpret, negotiate, resist, or rework gendered expectations through everyday practices such as mentorship, performance excellence, or advocacy even within highly constrained institutional environments.
- **Discrimination:** This term is used to explain several types of oppressive behaviours including sex discrimination, race discrimination, and age discrimination (Kurtz, Linnemann, & Williams, 2012).
- **Gender Equity:** Fair treatment and access to opportunities that account for structural and biological differences between men and women. It is distinct from “gender equality,” which implies identical treatment. In the GAFs context, gender equity includes context-sensitive physical fitness standards, maternity support, and leadership pathways that acknowledge historical and systemic disadvantages faced by women (Siegel, 2013).
- **Equal opportunities:** This means ensuring the opportunity for full and equal participation of men and women in all aspects of political, social, cultural, and economic life (Mason, 2022).
- **Gender:** *Gender* refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men (WHO, 2022).
- **Gender Integration:** Gender integration (or mainstreaming) is the process of assessing the implications for women, men, and people with diverse gender identities of any planned action -including legislation, policies, or programmes in all areas and at all levels (Rai, 2017).

- **Gender Mainstreaming:** It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures, and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination (Staudt, 2018).
- **Gendered Role:** These are roles assigned by social criteria rather than biological.
- **Inequality:** Inequality exists for a person whenever his/her perceived job inputs and/or outcomes stand psychologically in an obverse relation to what he or she perceives are the inputs and/or outcomes of other (Tims, 2016).
- **Stereotypes:** A stereotype is a commonly held, simplistic, and essentialist opinion about a certain group. Sex, gender identity, race and ethnicity, country, age, financial level, language, and other factors are frequently used to stereotype groups (Lavaysse & Probst, 2022). Stereotypes are strongly established in social systems and traditions.

These definitions anchor the study in empirical specificity and ensure that abstract concepts are grounded in the lived realities of GAF personnel.

### 1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has established that while no official barriers prevent women from enlisting in the GAF, de facto inequalities in promotion, infrastructure, and culture limit their career advancement and sense of belonging. The phenomenological gap in Ghanaian literature necessitates this study, which centres on lived experience over policy rhetoric. Aligned with current empirical evidence (2020 - 2024) and robust theory, the research aims not only to diagnose inequality but to empower institutional transformation. The following chapters build this case through literature, theory, method, findings, and actionable reform.

Having established the thesis research problem, objectives, and theoretical orientation, the discussion now turns to a critical review of existing scholarship on gender, security, and military institutions. This literature review situates the present study within broader academic and policy discourses, tracing the evolution of gendered roles in Ghana's security sector while identifying the phenomenological gap that this research seeks to fill. Particular attention is given to recent empirical work (2020 - 2024) on the GAF, gendered power dynamics, and women's lived experiences in non-Western militaries thereby grounding the study in current, context-specific knowledge rather than outdated or abstract theorizing.



## CHAPTER TWO (2)

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter critically reviews contemporary scholarly literature on gender, military culture, and institutional power within the GAF, with a deliberate focus on understanding the lived experiences of female personnel. Whereas many existing works provide valuable insights into formal gender policies, recruitment patterns, or the bureaucratic structure of the military, far fewer studies interrogate the subjective, phenomenological dimensions of women's everyday interactions within this deeply hierarchical and male-dominated institution. By moving beyond general theorization and narrowing its scope to Ghana relevant empirical studies published between 2020 and 2024, the chapter seeks to foreground the specific cultural, historical, and institutional configurations that shape women's lives in the GAF. In doing so, it aligns with the revised objectives of the study, which emphasize an appreciation of gendered experiences as socially produced, contested, and lived realities, rather than abstract statistical categories. The review unfolds across five interconnected thematic areas that map directly onto the broader concerns of the study: the historical context of gender roles in Ghana's security sector; contemporary gender dynamics and institutional culture; agency, identity, and resistance among servicewomen; gendered power dynamics and career trajectories; and policy interventions with their persistent implementation gaps. Across these strands, a persistent finding emerges; legal and policy reforms may have opened the doors to women's formal participation, but deeper cultural structures of militarized masculinity continue to shape their lived realities in ways that maintain their marginal status. This observation is particularly striking given the scarcity of scholarship exploring how GAF women experience and interpret gendered

power in their daily professional lives. Consequently, the chapter identifies a crucial phenomenological gap which is the absence of qualitative, narrative-rich studies that examine how servicewomen interpret, negotiate, and respond to gendered institutional structures. This study contributes toward filling that gap by situating its analysis in the lived, embodied, and interpretive experiences of GAF women, understood through Social Constructivism and the Psychopolitics of Consciousness. These theoretical lenses make it possible to interrogate not only the external structures shaping military experiences but also the internalized meanings through which women navigate identity, power, and agency within the institution.

The concept of “Interrogating Gender, Politics, Agency, and the Woman Question Beyond the 'Gettier Problem’” “encompasses a multidimensional exploration of gender, politics, agency, and the complexities surrounding women's experiences beyond the philosophical Gettier Problem. This literature review aims to provide an overview of relevant studies, theories, and perspectives that shed light on these interconnected topics within the context of phenomenological research.

## **2.1 The “Gettier Problem”**

The Gettier Problem, identified as a belief that is both true and well supported by evidence but fails to qualify as knowledge, has been the subject of extensive discussion and debate in the field of epistemology. Scholars such as Borges et al. (2017) and Lehrer (1979) have delved into the nature of this problem, pointing out that there are situations where a belief may be justified and supported by evidence, yet it does not necessarily correspond to truth. Nevertheless, individuals may find themselves tempted to accept or believe such propositions due to the presence of other true statements or evidence.

Lehrer (1979) recognized the need to articulate a theory of epistemological support that would account for cases where beliefs may be weakly justified but still contribute to knowledge, as well as cases where beliefs may not be true yet prevent one from attaining knowledge through rationalization. This highlights the complex relationship between belief, acceptance, and the acquisition of knowledge. People may accept certain things they believe, even if they have doubts, and conversely, they may believe certain things yet refuse to accept them fully.

Gettier (1963) made a significant contribution to the understanding of the Gettier Problem by presenting two counter-examples that challenged the notion that Justified True Belief (JTB) alone is sufficient for knowledge. Hetherington (2018) corroborated this view, further affirming the insufficiency of JTB as a criterion for knowledge. The Gettier Problem has ignited substantial debate within the realm of epistemology. Ogar (2020) argues that the problem itself is essentially a “nothingness,” suggesting that the traditional account of knowledge as JTB should not be invalidated based on it. Jin-jie (2009) adds another perspective, contending that the problem stems from a lack of logical coordination between justification and truth, ultimately serving as a critique of the ideal definition of knowledge. Sturgeon (1993) acknowledges the complexity of the Gettier Problem, noting that it has prompted the formulation of numerous thought experiments and responses, which have at times obscured its deeper significance.

However, despite the complexities and divergent viewpoints surrounding the Gettier Problem, its significance lies in the exploration of why it arises and how it can be resolved. Scholars continue to grapple with this issue, seeking to refine our understanding of knowledge and develop more comprehensive theories that can encompass the subtleties and nuances brought to light by the Gettier Problem.

## 2.2 Conceptualizing Gender

Gender is a social construct that refers to the characteristics, roles, and expectations that are socially acquired and associated with being a man or a woman. It is important to distinguish gender from biological sex, which is determined by physical attributes. Gender is a multifaceted concept that extends beyond individual identities and encompasses broader social structures, power dynamics, and cultural norms.

Nelson (1992) emphasizes the distinction between gender and value, highlighting the need to consider the variations, complementarity, or distortions in the relationships between genders. This suggests that gender is not simply about differences between men and women, but also about the values and hierarchies that are attached to these differences.

Risman (2004) builds upon this understanding by viewing gender as a social structure that influences individual experiences, social interactions, and institutional practices. Gender is not solely about personal identity, but also about how it shapes relationships and it is reinforced by societal norms and institutions.

Connell (1985) proposes a practice-based theory of gender, challenging the notion that gender is solely determined by biology. According to this theory, gender is constructed through social practices and performances, rather than being a fixed or innate characteristic.

Woodward (2011) highlights the significance of conceptualizing gender in understanding social relations, change, and inequalities. Gender serves as both a theoretical concept, providing a framework for analysing social phenomena, and an empirical classification used to categorize and analyse real-world data.

In summary, gender is a social construct encompassing socially acquired characteristics and expectations linked to being a man or a woman. It is shaped by social structures, power dynamics, and cultural norms, extending beyond biological factors. Gender influences individuals, interactions, and institutions, making it crucial for examining social relations, inequalities, and societal changes.

### 2.3 Historical Context of Gender Roles in Ghana's Security Sector

The historical configuration of gender roles within Ghana's security sector is crucial for understanding the contemporary dynamics that shape women's participation in the GAF. The gendered foundations of Ghana's security institutions were established long before their formal creation and were deeply embedded in the sociocultural and political legacy of both precolonial and colonial state formations. Precolonial Ghanaian societies were not universally patriarchal; women exercised significant authority in spheres such as spiritual protection, economic organization, and mediation (Allman, 2009). However, warfare and militaristic protection of territory were predominantly associated with men, and this gendered division became amplified under colonial rule. British colonial administrators institutionalized militarized masculinity by designing the colonial regiment around physical strength, discipline, and loyalty traits coded as inherently male and buttressed by exclusionary racialized and gendered hierarchies (Killingray, 2012).

These colonial legacies carried into the post-independence era, where the emergent Ghanaian state adopted the British military model nearly wholesale. Women were permitted into the Ghana Police Service in 1948 primarily as clerical workers and support staff, and into the GAF only in 1979, three decades after independence under similarly restricted terms. Their roles were conceptualized not as integral to combat or command, but as auxiliary to male soldiering (Aning & Lartey, 2018). This restricted incorporation

illustrates what Yuval-Davis (1997) describes as gendered citizenship where women were symbolically valued for national development yet structurally excluded from the core institutions that defined state sovereignty.

By the early 2000s, Ghana had undertaken significant democratic reforms, including commitments to gender equality under the 1992 Constitution and international conventions such as Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, gendered institutional norms proved far more resilient than legal reforms. Even by 2024, women constitute less than 10% of GAF personnel, with their presence in combat arms and command roles remaining exceptionally low. Symbolic breakthroughs such as the promotion of Brigadier Generals Constance Edjeani, Felicia Twum Barima, and Commodore Faustina Boakyewaa Anokye represent individual excellence but do not signify systemic restructuring. These women broke barriers, but they did so within an institutional architecture fundamentally shaped by decades of gendered exclusion.

Understanding the persistence of this historical trajectory requires an appreciation of institutional inertia, or what Pierson (2004) terms “path dependence.” Once gendered norms of soldiering became embedded, they created self-reinforcing expectations about who belongs in the military and what leadership should look like. Thus, while Ghana’s postcolonial governments reconfigured the ideological foundations of the military from colonial defence to national sovereignty, these transformations did not dislodge the masculine ethos that remained central to military identity. This historical context continues to inform recruitment patterns, role assignments, and the symbolic meanings attached to military service today, making it a critical starting point for understanding contemporary dynamics.

The history of the Ghana Security Sector has been influenced by a complex interplay of cultural, social, and political factors that have shaped the role of gender within this institution. Traditionally, gender roles in the security sector have been largely moulded by Ghana's patriarchal culture, which has long prioritized male leadership and dominance in public life (Ilesanmi, 2021; Markwei, et al., 2023). Andrews and Enns (2020) highlight the gendered security threats created by extractive activities, which, despite their significance, have yet to receive widespread acknowledgment. Adatuu (2018) underscores the underrepresentation of women in local governance, attributing it to cultural and traditional factors. As a result, women have been underrepresented in the security sector, particularly in positions of leadership and decision-making.

Forkuor et al., (2016) suggests that sex-segregation in the labour market persists in Ghana's growing economy. This segregation is deeply rooted in the belief systems of the people, leading to the gender division of labour and the allocation of specific tasks based on gender. For example, in Ghana, certain occupations like trading in vegetables, cooking utensils, household items, and food vending have traditionally been associated with women, while jobs such as banking, engineering, yam business, and law have been expected of men. However, Forkuor et al., (2016) acknowledges that some individuals defy these occupational stereotypes and engage in non-traditional jobs either as an economic survival strategy or by personal choice (Aggleton et al., 2016). This highlights the underlying assumption that certain jobs, typically considered less skilled, are meant for women, while highly skilled professions like the GAF are seen as predominantly for men. The Ghana Statistical Service (2013) states that females find employment in several other sectors, but they are predominantly concentrated in trade, restaurants and hotels, as well as manufacturing. This perception warrants further reflection and critical analysis.

One key factor contributing to the marginalization of women in the security sector is the historical legacy of colonialism in Ghana. During the colonial period, the British established a hierarchical system of governance that granted power and authority to men, while women were largely excluded from formal political processes (Acheampong & Armah, 2014). This legacy has persisted into the post-colonial era, with women in Ghana continuing to face significant barriers to entry and advancement in the security sector. Patriarchal cultural norms and practices remain deeply embedded in the Ghanaian society, subjecting women to discrimination, harassment, and violence in both the public and private spheres (Ampofo, 2019).

In the security sector, women have historically faced exclusion from leadership and decision-making roles. For instance, the GAF did not admit women until 1979, and initially, they were limited to non-combat positions (Boateng, 2018). Similarly, women were not permitted to join the Ghana Police Service until 1948, and they were initially confined to clerical and support roles (Ilesanmi, 2021; Markwei, et al., 2023). While some progress has been made in recent years to promote gender equity within the security sector, women continue to be significantly underrepresented in leadership and decision-making positions, and they encounter discrimination and harassment based on their gender (Ampofo, 2019).

Abukari and Odai (2018) emphasize the need for reflection and critical analysis in understanding the gender division of labour in the labour market. Efforts to promote gender equity and inclusivity within Ghana's Security Sector has often faced resistance and backlash from those who adhere to traditional gender roles and norms. Ghanaian society is deeply rooted in gender inequality, which is perpetuated by cultural norms and practices, particularly in relation to patriarchal values and beliefs that assign men as

primary decision-makers and authority figures. This is particularly evident in the security sector, which is commonly perceived as a traditionally male-dominated and “macho” environment where women are considered less capable or suitable for certain roles (Ilesanmi, 2021; Markwei, et al., 2023).

According to Sikweyiya et al., (2020), patriarchal cultural norms and practices continue to shape the beliefs and attitudes of many Ghanaians, making it challenging to challenge and overcome gender inequalities in the security sector. Women who challenge these norms and seek entry into male-dominated spaces such as the security sector often face resistance, marginalization, and even violence as a result. This resistance is particularly evident in the security sector, where women aspiring leadership and decision-making roles often encounter hostility and scepticism. Boateng (2018) also highlights that the security sector is commonly perceived as a masculine and “macho” environment, where gender stereotypes and biases persist, perpetuating the belief that women are unsuited for certain roles. Consequently, women are often limited to support and administrative positions, while combat and operational roles are predominantly reserved for men. This inequality is evident in the GAF, where although women have been allowed to serve since 1979, they face numerous limitations, and only a few are permitted in specific combat and operational roles.

Notwithstanding these challenges, notable efforts have been made to promote gender equity within the security sector in Ghana. For instance, the establishment of the Gender Desk within the GAF in 2011 and the incorporation of gender mainstreaming into security sector policies and practices are commendable steps (Boateng, 2018). However, there is still work to be done to address the systemic barriers that women face in this crucial institution. Additionally, gender mainstreaming has been integrated into security sector

policies and practices, exemplified by the development of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security in 2015 (Adjei, 2019).

Promoting gender equity within the security sector necessitates addressing deeply ingrained cultural norms and beliefs that perpetuate gender inequality. A comprehensive approach is required, involving the transformation of attitudes and behaviours among both men and women, as well as addressing institutional policies and practices that reinforce gender bias and discrimination. Boateng (2018) suggests that creating inclusive policies and practices that provide equal opportunities for men and women to serve in all roles, regardless of gender, is a means to address gender biases within the security sector. Similarly, Adjei, (2019) emphasizes the importance of education and training programs that challenge gender stereotypes and foster gender equity within the security sector.

Despite these efforts, women in Ghana's Security Sector continue to encounter significant challenges, particularly in terms of accessing leadership positions and confronting gender-based discrimination and harassment (Ampofo, 2019). Further research is necessary to gain a better understanding of the historical context and contemporary dynamics of gender roles in Ghana's Security Sector. This research can aid in identifying the most effective strategies for promoting gender equity and inclusivity within this significant institution.

There are several notable research gaps in understanding gender dynamics within the Ghana Security Sector:

- a) Limited acknowledgment of gendered security threats: Andrews and Enns (2020) point out the lack of widespread acknowledgment and research on gendered security threats created by extractive activities in Ghana. Further research is needed to understand and address these threats.

- b) Underrepresentation of women in local governance and the security sector: Adatuu (2018) highlights the underrepresentation of women in local governance and the security sector, attributing it to cultural and traditional factors. More research is needed to explore the specific barriers and challenges faced by women in these areas.
- c) Cultural and social factors shaping gender roles: Forkuor et al., (2016) indicates that occupational stereotypes and the gender division of labour persist in Ghana's economy. Further research is needed to understand the underlying cultural and social factors that contribute to these occupational stereotypes.
- d) Historical legacy of colonialism: The historical legacy of colonialism in Ghana has had a significant impact on gender inequality in the security sector (Acheampong & Armah, 2014). More research is needed to explore the specific ways in which colonialism has shaped gender roles and biases in the security sector.
- e) Resistance to gender equity efforts: Abukari and Odai (2018) highlight the need for research that critically analyses the gender division of labour and the resistance faced by efforts to promote gender equity. Further research is needed to understand the underlying reasons for resistance and to identify effective strategies to overcome it.
- f) Systemic barriers faced by women in the security sector: Despite efforts to promote gender equity, women in Ghana's Security Sector continue to face significant challenges, including accessing leadership positions and confronting gender-based discrimination and harassment (Ampofo, 2019). Further research is needed to identify and address the systemic barriers that hinder women's advancement in the sector.

## 2.4 The Politics of Gender and Agency

The politics of gender and agency is a complex and multifaceted subject that has been explored in numerous studies. Scholars such as Markham (2013) and Tsikata (2009) have emphasized the significance of women's political participation and influence in policymaking. On the other hand, Shepherd (2012) has examined the gendered nature of political violence and the varying legitimacy of such acts. Buckley and Galligan (2013) and Marakowitz (1996) have both focused on the quest for political agency and the role of women in shaping political outcomes. Buckley and Galligan discuss the marginalization of women in modern politics in Ireland, while Marakowitz examines the nature of women's political agency in Finland.

Tsikata (2009) specifically discusses the potential of affirmative action as a means to address these issues and complement women's agency in politics. The paper concludes that affirmative action, if well designed with effective measures, can contribute to progress for women worldwide. However, for affirmative action to be successful, it must depart from an ahistorical approach and recognize its basis in addressing historical discrimination and inequality. Ignoring the centuries of discrimination that have necessitated affirmative action leads to unfair criticisms of its beneficiaries. Approaching affirmative action as a form of charity is more likely to perpetuate inequalities rather than address them. Collectively, these studies underscore the need for greater recognition of women's claims to representation, equality, and human rights within the political sphere.

Lawless et al., (2019), intimates that understanding gender and agency from a political perspective requires a comprehensive analysis of how societal structures, norms, and power dynamics shape individual agency and decision-making. Scholars in recent literature have contributed valuable insights, shedding light on the complex interplay

between gender identity and political forces. Notably, Judith Butler and Bell Hooks' foundational works continue to inspire current research, critically examining the construction of gender as a performative act intertwined with political influences. These highlight the impact of oppressive systems on women's agency and advocate for transformative politics to empower women and challenge hegemonic norms.

Butler (1990) in her book “Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity” has had a significant impact on gender theory and remains highly influential. In this groundbreaking work, Butler challenges traditional notions of gender as a fixed, essential category and instead argues that gender is performative, meaning that it is constructed and enacted through repeated acts and behaviours. According to Butler, gender is not something that individuals possess, but rather something they do. This perspective disrupts the binary understanding of gender and opens up possibilities for exploring the fluidity and multiplicity of gender identities.

While “Gender Trouble” was published earlier, scholars have continued to build on Butler's (2012) ideas and expand the discourse around gender performativity. In her later work, “Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'“, Butler re-evaluates her notion of performativity and examines the constraints imposed by binary gender categories. She questions how the performative aspect of gender might be more radically reconceptualized to challenge the limitations imposed by traditional gender norms.

Hooks' (2000) book “Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre” has been influential in shaping contemporary discussions on the intersection of gender and politics. Hooks argue for a feminism that takes into account the experiences of marginalized women and emphasizes the importance of addressing intersecting systems of oppression. Her work highlights the need to challenge not only gender inequality but also other forms of

oppression, such as racism and classism, which intersect with gender to shape women's experiences.

Building on Hooks' (2000) ideas, recent research has further explored the politics of gender and agency. Collins and Bilge (2019) provide a comprehensive examination of intersectionality theory in their book “Intersectionality.” They emphasize the interconnected nature of social identities and power relations, underscoring the significance of understanding how intersecting systems of oppression, including gender, race, class, and sexuality, shape individuals' experiences and opportunities for agency.

Childs and Hughes (2018) argue that despite progress in gender equality in politics, elite men continue to dominate, obstructing women's representation. They highlight the perception of political offices as more “masculine,” which contributes to a preference for male candidates. Their work aligns with Hooks' (2000) and Collins and Bilge's (2019) perspectives, emphasizing the importance of considering the diversity among women and applying an intersectional approach to men's representation in politics. Childs and Hughes contend that men's overrepresentation is not solely due to biological differences or merit, but rather stems from elite men's desire to maintain their political power and privilege based on gender, race, and class. To address gender imbalance, the article suggests challenging this power dynamic and not relying solely on increasing women's education and skills. It proposes the implementation of gender quotas as a means to loosen the grip of elite men on legislative seats. The opposition to gender quotas is seen as a threat to the political privilege of elite men rather than a rejection of group representation or strong interventions in general. This framework contributes to a more nuanced understanding of power, privilege, and how they operate across different social identities.

Furthermore, recent literature has examined the political dimensions of agency from diverse cultural and regional perspectives. Rajasingham-Senanayake (2018) explores women's agency in communication for development programs, particularly in South Asia, shedding light on how media and communication influence women's political participation and empowerment. The study underscores the role of agency in shaping women's engagement in the political sphere.

Ahmed (2017) offers another significant perspective on the political dimensions of agency in her work titled “Living a Feminist Life.” From an intersectional standpoint, Ahmed delves into the ways in which social identities intersect with gender, shaping individuals' experiences and possibilities for agency. By examining the intersectionality of gender with race, class, and sexuality, Ahmed enriches our understanding of the complexities and challenges faced by women from diverse backgrounds. Assibey-Mensah (1998) examines Ghana's Women-In-Development Program, focusing on its problems, issues, and potential solutions. The study highlights the need for programs that improve the status of rural Ghanaian women, who often face marginalization in economic development initiatives. Aziato (2016) identifies barriers to female education in Ghana, such as poverty, adolescent pregnancy, and family demands, and calls for context-specific measures to address these challenges.

In summary, the contemporary literature influenced by foundational works by Butler and Hooks provides a more nuanced and updated understanding of the politics of gender and agency. Scholars continue to explore the performative nature of gender, delve into the complexities of intersectionality, and examine how cultural and regional contexts shape women's agency. The insights from these recent studies emphasize the urgency of transformative politics that challenge oppressive structures and advocate for gender equity.

They provide a solid basis for policymaking and activism aimed at empowering women and dismantling hegemonic norms.

Additionally, other studies have highlighted the significance of women's political agency and the gendered nature of political violence, as well as the influence of national identity and ideology on women's participation in public policy (Buckley & Galligan, 2013; Markham, 2013; Åhäll, 2012; Marakowitz, 1996). These studies collectively underscore the significance of gender and agency in shaping political dynamics and outcomes. They emphasize the need to recognize and address the structural and systemic barriers that limit women's agency in political spheres and highlight the importance of creating inclusive and equitable political systems.

## 2.5 Contemporary Gender Dynamics in Ghana's Security Sector

Contemporary gender relations within Ghana's security sector reflect a tension between formal equality and persistent informal barriers. Ghana has made strong normative commitments to gender inclusion, particularly through the National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2018 - 2022), which outlines state obligations to support women's participation in peace and security. Nevertheless, empirical evidence suggests that gender inequality remains structurally entrenched within the GAF, where the culture of militarized masculinity continues to frame the institution as a fundamentally male space (Aning & Atuobi, 2020).

Recent data indicate that women comprise only about 5.5% of GAF personnel, with even smaller numbers in the Police Service (WPS Index, 2023). These figures reflect not merely limited recruitment, but also patterns of attrition, stagnation, and exclusion from elite operational roles. Studies conducted between 2020 and 2024 show that female personnel

often confront gender-based harassment, scepticism from male colleagues, and the perception that they are physically or emotionally unsuited for high-risk responsibilities (Dzreke, 2022). Many women report subtle forms of exclusion, such as being overlooked for deployment opportunities, being excluded from informal decision-making networks, and facing negative stereotyping about their competence or dedication.

These challenges stem largely from the dominance of militarized masculinity as an organizing principle of the Armed Forces. Enloe (2016) argues that militaries construct power through exaggerated displays of masculinity, physical toughness, emotional discipline, and stoic obedience. In Ghana, this ethos translates into an institutional assumption that femininity is antithetical to military professionalism. Physical training techniques, operational evaluations, and leadership criteria remain patterned around male bodies and masculinized expectations, creating a structural disadvantage for women regardless of their individual capabilities.

The everyday culture of the GAF further reinforces these dynamics. Male personnel dominate leadership positions and shape the norms around acceptable behaviour. Informal mentoring relationships tend to operate along gendered lines, with male officers mentoring male subordinates and women often left without supportive networks. Informal socialization such as mess hall interactions, evening gatherings, or sports events often becomes exclusionary, influencing performance evaluations and promotion outcomes. These patterns suggest that gender inequality within the GAF is reproduced not only through formal structures but also through cultural practices and interpersonal relations.

Yet, Ghana's gender dynamics must also be understood in relation to broader national sociocultural norms. Ghanaian society remains characterized by deeply entrenched expectations about women's domestic responsibilities, caregiving roles, and modesty

(Adjei, 2021). These norms bleed into military life where women are often judged not solely on professional competence but on perceived conformity to femininity. This creates a double burden for servicewomen, who must demonstrate competence in a masculine-coded institution while simultaneously upholding societal expectations of femininity.

Thus, contemporary gender dynamics in the GAF are shaped by the interplay between institutional norms, national sociocultural expectations, and the global security environment. While formal equality exists on paper, the lived reality of women reveals a complex landscape of obstacles that structure their opportunities and shape their experiences.

The gender dynamics within the security sector in Ghana are deeply intertwined with broader societal patterns and norms. Researchers such as Awumbila, Teye, and Yaro (2017) and Wrigley-Asante (2016) have shed light on how gender influences employment and safety concerns, with women often facing greater insecurity compared to men. Factors such as poor infrastructure and limited police presence disproportionately affect women and contribute to their vulnerability. Additionally, women's overrepresentation in precarious forms of employment, as highlighted by Heintz (2005), further exacerbates these challenges, as they may have limited job security and access to social protection.

Migration patterns in Ghana also play a role in shaping gender dynamics within the security sector. Awumbila et al., (2015) points out the feminization of migration, where women are increasingly migrating independently, often to urban centres. This migration can bring about additional challenges for women, such as limited social support networks and increased exposure to various risks. These gendered patterns of migration likely extend to the security sector, where women may face unique barriers and difficulties in their professional lives.

While Ghana's Security Sector is experiencing some changes in terms of gender dynamics, there is still a significant underrepresentation of women, particularly in leadership positions. Agyei-Mensah and Wrigley-Asante (2016) and Ingram et al. (2015) emphasize the efforts made in recent years to increase women's participation and promote gender mainstreaming. However, progress has been slow, and women's representation remains alarmingly low.

The 2019 Women Peace and Security Index ranks Ghana 113 out of 167 countries in terms of women's inclusion in the security sector (GIWPS, 2019). The GAF and the Police Service exhibit substantial gender imbalances, with women comprising only 5.5% and 1.3% of their respective personnel (MoGCSP, 2018). Similarly, women's representation in National Security and Intelligence Agencies is minimal, with few women holding leadership positions (Markwei et al., 2023). This underrepresentation of women not only limits their career opportunities but also hampers the effectiveness and diversity of the security sector.

Studies conducted by Aning et al., (2021) highlight the specific challenges faced by women in the security sector. These challenges include gender-based discrimination, harassment, and sexual exploitation, which not only undermine women's well-being but also hinder their effectiveness in performing their duties. Moreover, women in the security sector often struggle to balance work and family responsibilities, as societal expectations and traditional gender roles place additional burdens on them (Markwei et al., 2023). These factors contribute to lower job satisfaction and limited opportunities for career advancement among women in the sector.

In contrast, men within the security sector have historically enjoyed privileged access to power, resources, and career advancement opportunities. They occupy most leadership

positions and decision-making roles, perpetuating a gender imbalance in the sector (Aning et al., 2021). This imbalance reinforces traditional gender roles and biases, which can have detrimental effects on the overall effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and security outcomes (Gowlland-Debbas, 2017).

Several factors contribute to the persistent underrepresentation of women in Ghana's Security Sector. Cultural norms and attitudes that view women as inferior and unsuited for security-related professions, deeply rooted patriarchal structures, and traditional gender roles all play a significant role (Adjei, 2019). These deeply ingrained beliefs and biases contribute to a reluctance to recruit and promote women to leadership positions, despite their qualifications and experience. Furthermore, limited educational and training opportunities for women within the security sector itself perpetuate gender disparities and hinder their professional development.

Efforts have been made by the government and relevant institutions in Ghana to address gender inequality in the security sector. Policies and frameworks, such as the National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, aim to promote gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment (MoGCSP, 2018). The GAF has established the Women's Wing to provide support and training specifically for female soldiers (Boateng, 2017; UN, 2019). However, these efforts have not yet translated into substantial progress, as gender mainstreaming policies and frameworks are still in the process of being fully implemented.

Challenges remain in changing deeply entrenched attitudes and behaviours toward gender equality within the security services in Ghana. Institutional policies and practices that perpetuate gender bias and discrimination, such as limited opportunities for career advancement and training, continue to persist (Adjei, 2019). Addressing cultural norms

and attitudes that perpetuate gender stereotypes, promoting equal access to education and training for women, and creating policies and practices that provide equal opportunities for both men and women are critical steps toward promoting gender equity in Ghana's Security Sector.

In summary, the gender dynamics within Ghana's Security Sector are influenced by broader societal patterns and norms. Women face greater insecurities due to factors such as poor infrastructure and limited police presence, as well as their overrepresentation in precarious employment. Efforts to increase women's participation and promote gender mainstreaming in the sector have been made, but progress has been slow. Women remain significantly underrepresented, particularly in leadership positions. Cultural norms, limited educational opportunities, and gender biases within the sector contribute to these disparities. Women in the security sector often face discrimination, harassment, and challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities. To promote gender equity, addressing cultural norms, ensuring equal access to education and training, and implementing policies that provide equal opportunities for both men and women are essential steps that need to be taken.

Moreover, while research on gender dynamics within the security sector in Ghana has provided valuable insights, there are several research gaps that need to be addressed. These gaps include the need for intersectional analysis, qualitative studies to understand women's experiences, identifying barriers to women's leadership, exploring gender-based violence, studying best practices and interventions, examining the role of men, and conducting longitudinal studies. Filling these research gaps will provide a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics and inform policies and interventions to promote gender equality within Ghana's Security Sector.

## 2.6 Agency, Identity, and Resistance Among Servicewomen

Despite the constraints identified above, Ghanaian servicewomen demonstrate significant agency, indicating that military institutions though rigid, are not impermeable to gender renegotiation. The agency of servicewomen is best understood not as resistance in its dramatic forms, but through everyday acts of negotiation, identity management, and strategic adaptation. These acts align with African feminist theories that emphasize women's ability to navigate oppressive structures by deploying contextually embedded strategies of self-assertion (Nnaemeka, 2004).

A growing body of empirical work illustrates how Ghanaian servicewomen actively construct professional identities in ways that challenge militarized gender norms. Appiah and Kyeremeh (2019) show that female soldiers consciously cultivate reputations for technical competence, discipline, and reliability to counteract stereotypes of weakness. These reputational strategies reflect Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective, where individuals manage impressions to navigate social spaces. In the GAF, where masculinity is heavily valorised, women strategically perform "hyper-professionalism" to demonstrate legitimacy.

Identity negotiation also involves complex interactions between femininity and soldiering. Many female soldiers report carefully balancing their military identity with culturally sanctioned expressions of femininity to avoid being perceived as "too masculine." This balancing act creates what Butler (1990) describes as gender performativity, women must continually enact gender in ways that are intelligible both within the military and Ghanaian society. In practice, this might involve adopting authoritative communication styles while maintaining socially acceptable codes of dress, appearance, and demeanour.

Resistance occurs not only through individual identity management but also through collective action. Organizations such as the Ghana Army Women's Association provide mentorship, solidarity, and informal advocacy spaces. Through shared experiences and collective voices, such associations challenge institutional narratives that marginalize women. Dabire et al. (2020) find that policewomen similarly rely on informal networks to cope with balancing professional responsibilities and domestic roles, indicating a cross-sectoral pattern of collective resilience.

Servicewomen also engage in more explicit forms of resistance, including reporting discriminatory behaviour, petitioning for fair deployment opportunities, and participating in gender-advocacy spaces such as the Elsie Initiative. The willingness of some women to challenge biased decisions demonstrates what Mahmood (2005) calls "ethical agency" a form of resistance rooted in moral conviction and embodied discipline rather than overt confrontation.

Ultimately, the agency of GAF women complicates narratives that portray them solely as victims of institutional inequality. They are active participants who negotiate, resist, and reshape gendered power structures, even as they remain constrained by them.

## **2.7 Woman Question and Feminism**

The "woman question" has been a central issue in feminist discourse, encompassing a range of debates on women's rights, roles, and status in the society (Delap, 2011). This discourse has been shaped by diverse perspectives, including those of African radicals (Abusharaf, 2004) and scholars in higher education (May, 2008). The concept of gender difference and its impact on women's lives has been a key focus, with attention to the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality (Evans, 1980). These discussions have

highlighted the need for a more inclusive and equitable society, where women can fully participate in knowledge production and have their rights affirmed and liberated.

Benschop, (2021) and Pasque and Nicholson, (2023) among others argue that, over the years, feminist scholars have engaged in rigorous examinations of this question, striving to dismantle patriarchal systems and advocate for gender equality. By delving into the ways in which feminist thought has expanded and adapted to address diverse experiences, intersectionality, global perspectives, and digital feminism, we can gain profound insights into the ongoing struggle for gender equality.

One significant development in feminist literature is the growing emphasis on intersectionality, which recognizes that women's experiences are shaped by the intersection of multiple social identities. This perspective acknowledges that gender alone does not determine the lives of women, and factors such as race, class, sexuality, and ability also play pivotal roles. Moraga and Anzaldúa (2015), in a study asserts that contributors delve deep into the complexities of intersecting identities and experiences, underscoring the necessity of addressing the unique challenges faced by women of colour within feminist movements. This literature showcases how intersectionality has expanded the discourse surrounding the “Woman Question,” fostering a more inclusive understanding of gender issues.

Moreover, contemporary feminist literature has transcended Western-centric approaches to embrace global perspectives on gender and women's rights. In “Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity”, Mohanty (2016) examines how Western feminism has often disregarded the diverse struggles of women in the Global South. The book advocates for a more inclusive and decolonized feminist agenda that centres the experiences and aspirations of women worldwide. Additionally, “Globalizing

Feminist Bioethics” by Tong and Donovan (2019) explores the intersection of bioethics and feminist theory in addressing global health disparities. These works highlight the importance of considering cultural, social, and political contexts when seeking to understand and address the challenges faced by women on a global scale. Furthermore, recent feminist literature has expanded the scope of the “Woman Question” beyond Western contexts to incorporate a global perspective. In “We Should All Be Feminists” Adichie (2014), advocates for a global feminism that recognizes and addresses the common struggles faced by women worldwide. This literature underscores the imperative of considering diverse cultural, social, and political contexts in order to comprehend and confront the challenges confronted by women.

In response to evolving gender norms, contemporary feminist scholarship has actively challenged traditional gender roles and societal expectations. Soh (2020) critically examines the scientific basis of gender and its societal implications. Through debunking popular myths surrounding gender and advocating for a more nuanced understanding of identity, this book contributes to ongoing debates about gender roles and expectations. Similarly, “Lean Out: The Struggle for Gender Equality in Tech and Start-Up Culture” by Shevinsky (2015) addresses gender inequalities within the male-dominated technology industry, shedding light on the challenges faced by women pursuing careers in this field.

The rise of digital platforms has ushered in a new era of feminist discourse and activism. In “The Future of Feminism” Cox (2023), explores the impact of digital feminism on shaping gender narratives and mobilizing feminist movements. The book delves into how online spaces provide opportunities for women to challenge patriarchal norms and advocate for gender equality. Additionally, “Hashtag Feminism: Media, Mobilization, and Contemporary Feminist Activism” by Banet-Weiser and Miltner (2019) delves into the

role of social media in shaping feminist activism and public discourse. Such literature exemplifies the transformative power of digital feminism in interrogating the “Woman Question” and fostering collective feminist action.

In the book edited by Agyei-Mensah, Ayee and Oduro (2014) titled “Changing Perspectives on the Social Sciences in Ghana,” the provide a comprehensive exploration of the evolution and current state of the social sciences in the Ghanaian context is presented. This collection of diverse chapters contributed by various scholars’ sheds light on specific aspects of the social sciences and their significance in Ghanaian society. One notable chapter within the book, “Women and Gender Studies in Ghana,” authored by Yeboah, Ampofo, and Brobbey, (2014), delves into the field of women and gender studies within the Ghanaian academic and social context. The chapter examines the historical development of women's studies, highlighting the milestones and challenges encountered in establishing this area of research within Ghanaian academia. Additionally, the chapter explores the current status of gender studies in Ghana, shedding light on the growing awareness of gender-related issues in various spheres of society.

The authors provide critical insights into the contributions made by women and gender studies in addressing societal inequalities and advocating for women's rights and empowerment in Ghana. They discuss the importance of integrating gender perspectives into various disciplines to promote a more inclusive and equitable society. Moreover, the chapter assesses the challenges faced in mainstreaming gender issues within academic institutions and the wider community, providing recommendations for further advancement (Yeboah-Banin et al., 2014).

In conclusion, the “Woman Question” remains a central and evolving theme in feminist literature, continuously adapting alongside the changing socio-political landscape. Recent

literature emphasizes intersectionality, global perspectives, and digital feminism, broadening the discourse beyond historical debates. By critically analysing gender roles and societal expectations, contemporary feminist scholarship aims to dismantle patriarchal systems and promote gender equality. This ongoing dialogue exemplifies the resilience and adaptability of feminist literature as it addresses the multifaceted dimensions of the “Woman Question”.

## 2.8 Beyond The “Gettier Problem”

The “Gettier Problem” is a philosophical puzzle that has puzzled epistemologists for decades, challenging the traditional definition of knowledge as Justified True Belief. It originated from the work of Edmund Gettier, who presented counterexamples that undermined the notion that knowledge can be reduced to justified true belief (Borges, De Almeida, & Klein, (2017). These counterexamples raised doubts about the adequacy of the traditional account and sparked a vigorous debate among philosophers.

The problem has been extensively explored and analysed by scholars from various perspectives. Ogar (2020) argues that the Gettier Problem is essentially a “nothingness,” suggesting that it does not fundamentally undermine the traditional account of knowledge. Sturgeon (1993) highlights the complexity and significance of the problem, emphasizing its impact on our understanding of knowledge and epistemic justification. Lehrer (1979) proposes a fallibilistic theory of epistemic justification as a potential solution to the problem, suggesting that knowledge can be understood as a fallible form of justified true belief. Chudnoff (2011) further complicates the issue by distinguishing between necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge and delving into the role of justification in our understanding of knowledge.

However, when we shift our focus to gendered roles in the security sector, the significance of the Gettier Problem expands beyond its epistemological implications. It becomes a metaphor for questioning deeply ingrained gender norms and stereotypes that undermine women's capabilities and contributions in security-related professions.

Addressing gender disparities in the security sector becomes essential to combat the challenges posed by the Gettier Problem. Henson, Forster, and Dix (2018) examine the barriers that women face in advancing their careers in the military and security services in their article “Women's Progression in the UK Armed Forces: Breaking Through the 'Brass Ceiling'.” Henson, et al., (2018) shed light on the gender representation issues within these institutions and emphasize the importance of promoting gender diversity to enhance their effectiveness.

Similarly, Deimel and Sedra (2019) analyse efforts to promote gender equality within Afghanistan's security institutions in their article “Integrating Gender in Security Sector Reform: The Case of Afghanistan.” They emphasize the need to incorporate gender perspectives in security sector reform to improve effectiveness and inclusivity.

In conclusion, the Gettier Problem not only challenges our understanding of knowledge but also reveals the multifaceted challenges related to women's participation, representation, and experiences in the security sector. By applying an intersectional lens and drawing from recent scholarly works, it becomes evident that transformative actions are urgently needed to create an equitable and effective security sector that fully recognizes and harnesses women's potential. This requires addressing gender disparities, promoting gender diversity, and integrating gender perspectives in security sector reform efforts.

## 2.9 Roles of Gender in The Security Sector Decision-Making Process

The role of gender in the decision-making process within the security sector is complex and multifaceted, as highlighted by various scholars. Wilén (2014) draws attention to the challenges faced by women in the security services, who often find themselves navigating an overwhelmingly masculine environment. These women rely on their own vision of femininity to initiate change, as they strive to challenge gender norms and establish their presence within the traditionally male-dominated sector.

Olonisakin, Hendricks, and Okech (2018) emphasizes the importance of the convergence of feminist security studies, civil society activism, and policy decision-making in advancing the gender and security agenda. However, she also acknowledges the existing disconnect between these pillars, indicating the need for greater integration and collaboration. Holvikivi (2015) emphasizes the role of security sector reform in implementing the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda. This reform is crucial in ensuring good governance and accountability within the sector, as well as addressing gender disparities and promoting the inclusion of women in decision-making processes. Arostegui (2015) underscores the significance of integrating a gender perspective into the security sector. This integration serves not only to uphold human rights principles but also to improve decision-making and operational effectiveness by considering the unique experiences and contributions of women.

Studies conducted by Peterson and Runyan (2018) in the United States and Fawcett (2020) in Australia provide evidence that gender plays a role in shaping decision-making processes within the security sector. Women in the Police force in both countries were found to prioritize community policing, collaboration, community engagement, and prevention efforts more than their male counterparts. These findings suggest that gender

diversity within the security sector can contribute to the development of more comprehensive and effective security policies.

Hudson and Leidl (2015) examined the impact of gender on Police Officers' attitudes towards community policing in the United States, finding that female Police Officers were more likely to embrace community policing strategies. They viewed their role as focused on community service rather than solely on law enforcement. The authors argue that increasing the number of female Police Officers can lead to the adoption of more community-focused policing strategies and improved relations between the Police and the public.

Ndi et al. (2018) focused on the role of women in peacekeeping missions in Africa and found that female peacekeepers were more likely to engage with local communities and build trust with civilians. This increased engagement and trust-building contributed to the overall effectiveness of peacekeeping efforts. The authors suggest that increasing the number of female peacekeepers could enhance the success of peacekeeping missions in conflict-affected regions.

A study by Albrecht et al. (2016) examined the experiences of women in the military in Germany. The study revealed that women faced numerous challenges, including gender discrimination, stereotyping, limited career advancement opportunities, and exclusion from combat roles. The authors argue that addressing these challenges and promoting gender equality within the military would result in a more effective and inclusive Armed Forces.

In Ghana, women have played a significant role in the security sector for several decades. Ankomah and Asiedu (2019) conducted a study that specifically explored the role of

women in community policing in Ghana. The findings revealed that women were increasingly contributing to community policing efforts, particularly in areas such as crime prevention and victim support. The authors argue that increasing the participation of women in community policing can foster stronger relationships between the police and the public and improve overall security outcomes.

The decision-making process within the security sector is a critical area where gender roles and dynamics come into play. Multiple studies have demonstrated that gender is an important factor influencing decision-making processes in the security sector (Boateng, 2017; Aning et al., 2021). A significant issue highlighted in many countries, including Ghana, is the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions (Boateng, 2017). Women are typically marginalized in senior and executive roles, and this underrepresentation is attributed to institutional and systemic barriers that hinder women's career progression. Additionally, persistent gendered norms and stereotypes within the sector further contribute to the disparity (Aning et al., 2021).

However, there are several gaps in the literature that need to be addressed. These include the need for intersectional analyses that consider the intersections of gender with other social identities, more research from Global South perspectives, longitudinal studies to track changes over time, qualitative research to capture lived experiences, comparative analyses across different countries, exploration of agency and resistance strategies of women, and rigorous impact evaluations to assess the actual impact of gender representation on security outcomes.

## 2.10 Impact of Gender Roles on Security Sector Performance

Gender roles and norms have significant impacts on the performance of the security sector. The influence of gender roles on security sector performance is a complex issue, and existing research sheds light on various aspects of this phenomenon. One area of concern is the underrepresentation of women in the cybersecurity industry. Peacock and Irons, (2017) highlights this issue, emphasizing that women's limited participation in cybersecurity roles hampers diversity and innovation within the sector. The lack of gender diversity in this critical field not only limits the perspectives and skills brought to the table but also contributes to a broader gender imbalance in the security sector.

Women's organizations play a crucial role in influencing security sector reform, as noted by Bastick (2017). However, these organizations often face marginalization in post-conflict defence sector reform, despite their active roles as combatants, as highlighted by Gordon (2018). This marginalization prevents women from effectively contributing to decision-making processes and shaping security policies that are inclusive and responsive to gender concerns.

Examining the case of Burundi, Wilén (2014) underscores the challenges faced by local women in the security forces. These women struggle to operationalize the gender discourse within a male-dominated environment. Their efforts often revolve around making small practical changes to navigate and survive in a system that may not fully embrace gender equality. This highlights the need for more comprehensive and gender-responsive approaches to address the specific challenges faced by women in security forces.

In the Ghanaian context, traditional gender roles and stereotypes shape the culture and attitudes of the security sector. Women are often perceived as less capable or unsuitable

for certain roles, while men are expected to demonstrate dominance, aggression, and physical strength. These gendered expectations have significant impacts on the performance of the security sector, influencing everything from recruitment and training to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Research indicates that increasing the participation of women in the security sector can have positive impacts on peacekeeping operations. Karim (2018) highlights that women's participation in peacekeeping missions improves communication with local communities, enhances access to information and intelligence, and contributes to more effective community policing. Moreover, women's involvement in the security sector can foster a greater respect for human rights, the rule of law, and public trust in security institutions, as noted by Gowlland-Debbas (2017).

The impact of gender on security sector performance has been the subject of ongoing debate. Some argue that gender diversity leads to better decision-making and more effective security policies. Drezner's study (2018) suggests that gender diversity in the military promotes more creative and effective problem-solving and decision-making. Similarly, Hale and Duncanson (2019) argue that gender diversity in international security contributes to more comprehensive and nuanced security policies. However, other research, such as Hess's study (2018), cautions that gender diversity alone may not be sufficient to address underlying cultural and structural barriers to effective problem-solving.

Despite the potential benefits, the participation of women in the security sector in Ghana remains low. The Women Peace and Security Index ranks Ghana 113 out of 167 countries in terms of women's inclusion in the security sector (GIWPS, 2019). Women represent only a small percentage of the GAF and the Police Service (MoGCSP, 2018). Furthermore,

women's representation in leadership positions within the National Security and Intelligence Agencies is limited (Markwei et al., 2023).

Patriarchal cultural norms and attitudes towards women in Ghana contribute to these low levels of women's participation in the security sector, as noted by Boateng (2018). The perception that women are unsuited for physically demanding or combat-related roles creates reluctance to recruit and promote women to leadership positions, despite their qualifications and experience. Additionally, cultural expectations regarding women's roles as caretakers and mothers can make it challenging for women to balance family responsibilities with the demands of a career in the security sector (Markwei et al., 2023).

Institutional policies and practices also play a role in shaping the gender dynamics of the security sector. Limited opportunities for career advancement, biased practices, and discrimination within security institutions contribute to the underrepresentation of women (Adjei, 2019). Efforts have been made to address these challenges, such as the development of policies and frameworks by the Ghanaian government to promote gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in the security sector, including the National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (MoGCSP, 2018). The establishment of the Women's Wing within the GAF represents another initiative to increase women's participation and support their training needs (Boateng, 2018).

However, progress towards gender equality in the security sector remains slow. Gender mainstreaming policies and frameworks have yet to be fully implemented, and changing attitudes and behaviours towards gender equality present ongoing challenges. Moreover, the impact of women's participation in the security sector can be limited by broader societal attitudes and expectations around gender roles. In contexts where violence against women

is prevalent, female security personnel may face unique challenges in carrying out their duties effectively (Karim, 2018).

The impact of gender roles on the performance of the security sector in Ghana is a critical issue that requires ongoing attention and action. By addressing the structural and cultural barriers that limit women's participation in the security sector, it is possible to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, promote greater respect for human rights and the rule of law, and build a more inclusive and equitable societies (Peacock & Irons, 2017).

To achieve these goals, comprehensive efforts are needed. First, there is a need for targeted recruitment and retention strategies that actively encourage women to join the security sector. This includes addressing biases in recruitment processes, providing equal opportunities for training and career advancement, and establishing support networks for women within security institutions (Gordon, 2020; Peacock & Irons, 2017). Mentoring programs and leadership development initiatives can also play a crucial role in empowering women and preparing them for leadership positions.

Addressing cultural norms and attitudes towards gender is equally important. This involves challenging stereotypes that limit the roles and capabilities of women in the security sector. Public awareness campaigns, educational programs, and community engagement initiatives can help shift societal perceptions and promote gender equality (Wilén, 2014). It is essential to involve men and boys as allies in this process, emphasizing the benefits of gender diversity and challenging harmful notions of masculinity that perpetuate gender inequalities (Bonvillain, 2020). Institutional policies and practices must be aligned with the goal of gender equality. Gender mainstreaming should be integrated into all aspects of security sector operations, including policy development, planning, implementation, and evaluation. This requires a commitment to gender-responsive

budgeting, data collection and analysis disaggregated by gender, and regular monitoring and reporting on progress towards gender equality goals.

International collaboration and knowledge sharing can also contribute to promoting gender equality in the security sector. Exchange programs, partnerships, and networking opportunities can facilitate learning from best practices and experiences of other countries. Engaging with regional and international organizations that focus on gender and security issues can provide valuable resources and support for advancing gender equality agendas.

It is crucial to recognize that achieving gender equality in the security sector is a long-term process that requires sustained commitment and effort. It involves challenging deep-rooted attitudes, dismantling systemic barriers, and fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for women. By doing so, Ghana can harness the full potential of its diverse population, enhance security sector performance, and contribute to a more peaceful and equitable society.

### **2.11 Experiences of Personnel on Gendered Roles in The Security Services**

The experiences of women in security sector roles have garnered significant attention through extensive research and discussions. Despite efforts to promote gender equity and inclusivity, women still encounter substantial challenges when it comes to accessing and advancing in these roles. Several studies, such as the one conducted by Breen and Colleagues (2018), have shed light on the experiences of women in the security sector, uncovering various forms of bias and discrimination they face.

One notable finding from Breen et al.'s (2018) research is that women often confront bias in hiring and promotion processes. Equally qualified women frequently experience preference given to men, which has significant implications for their career trajectories.

This bias can be subtle and challenging to detect, yet it profoundly affects women's opportunities for advancement within the sector. Additionally, women report instances of harassment and exclusion from informal networks, which are crucial for career development and progression.

Scholars like McKeown (2003), Bastick (2017), and Rensburg (2021) have argued that the experiences of personnel in the security services are influenced by gendered roles and expectations. McKeown's work highlights the reluctance of staff to acknowledge gender in their understanding of women's behaviour in secure units. This reluctance may stem from the reinforcement of hegemonic military masculinities discussed by Basham (2008), which restrict the participation and recognition of women and sexual minorities in the Armed Forces. Bastick (2017) and Rensburg (2021) underscore the need for gender-responsive approaches in security sector reform and the security industry, respectively. These approaches aim to address the challenges and tensions related to gender equality and career progression.

In line with Breen et al.'s (2018) findings, a study by Abiodun and colleagues (2020) focused on women in the Police Force in Nigeria. The research revealed that these women encountered challenges related to sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and stereotyping. Similarly, a study by Dabire et al. (2020) examined the experiences of female Police Officers in Ghana and identified various forms of gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, exclusion from certain operational roles, and limited opportunities for career advancement. The study also highlighted the additional burden faced by these women in terms of work-family balance, as many of them had caregiving and domestic responsibilities in addition to their police duties.

Another study by Appiah and Kyeremeh (2019) centered on the experiences of female soldiers in Ghana. The research found that women in the military encountered a range of gender-based challenges, including limited opportunities for training and career advancement, as well as exclusion from certain roles due to prevailing gender stereotypes. Work-family balance was also a significant concern for female soldiers, as they often had responsibilities for caring for children and other family members.

The study by Addo and Amoah (2015) delved into a historical analysis of women's roles and contributions to security services in Ghana. The authors noted that while women have long been involved in security services in Ghana, they have typically been confined to non-combatant roles. The study argued that gender stereotypes and discrimination have substantially limited women's participation in security services in the country.

Collectively, these studies underscore the multifaceted gender-based challenges faced by women in the security services, encompassing discrimination, limited opportunities for career advancement, and difficulties in achieving work-family balance. It is imperative for security services in Ghana to address these challenges and strive towards creating a more inclusive and gender-sensitive environment that supports and empowers women in the sector. This may involve implementing policies and practices that promote gender equity, eradicating biases in recruitment and promotion processes, providing mentorship and training opportunities tailored to women, and challenging prevailing gender stereotypes and norms within the sector.

## **2.12 Challenges Faced by Women in Ghana's Security Sector**

The literature reveals that women in Ghana's security services have undoubtedly made significant progress, yet they continue to confront a wide range of gender-based challenges

that impede their success and advancement in their careers. Gender discrimination emerges as one of the most prominent obstacles faced by women in the security services (Herring, 2013). Discrimination manifests in various areas, including restricted access to training programs, limited opportunities for leadership positions, fewer chances for promotions, and unequal pay. Research indicates that women in the military often find themselves assigned to roles of lesser importance or lower challenge levels, which hampers their ability to acquire the necessary experience and skills required for career progression (Herring, 2013). Similarly, in Ghana, women tend to be assigned to lower-ranking positions and are frequently overlooked for promotions and leadership roles, thereby limiting their prospects for gaining the experience and skills necessary for career advancement (Afriyie & Sarpong, 2019).

In addition to gender discrimination, women in the security services face the pervasive issue of sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence, creating a hostile work environment that obstructs their ability to succeed in their roles (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2015). This problem is not exclusive to Ghana but is also experienced by female personnel within the country. Instances of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and assault, contribute to a work environment that is detrimental to women's success and well-being (Ilesanmi, 2021; Markwei, et al., 2023).

Another significant challenge highlighted in the literature is the lack of representation of women in decision-making positions within the security services. Women are consistently underrepresented in leadership roles, which limits their influence on policy-making and the overall direction of the sector (United Nations, 2019). The absence of representation hampers women's ability to advocate for their needs and interests, further perpetuating the barriers they face within the sector.

Moreover, the lack of support for work-life balance poses a significant challenge for women in the security services. Women are often expected to prioritize their careers over family responsibilities, which creates difficulties in achieving a satisfactory work-life balance. In the military, for instance, studies have indicated that women may be penalized for taking maternity leave or requesting flexible work arrangements (Dombrowski et al., 2018). These circumstances make it arduous for women to effectively balance their work and family responsibilities, ultimately hindering their success in their roles.

Furthermore, women in the security services encounter challenges related to physical fitness and safety. Despite the physiological differences between men and women, women are often held to the same physical fitness standards as their male counterparts (van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). This expectation can limit their ability to thrive in physically demanding roles and may jeopardize their personal safety. Additionally, the lack of adequate facilities and equipment specifically designed for women in the Ghanaian security sector further compounds the difficulties they face (Afriyie & Sarpong, 2019). These limitations underscore the need to address the disparities and provide suitable resources to ensure the safety and well-being of women in the security services.

In conclusion, the literature review highlights the persistent gender-based challenges that women in the Ghana security service encounter. These challenges include gender discrimination, sexual harassment and violence, underrepresentation in decision-making positions, limited support for work-life balance, and obstacles related to physical fitness and safety. While women in leadership positions demonstrate resilience and determination in navigating these challenges, further research and policy interventions are necessary to address these issues and foster the advancement of women in the sector. Efforts should focus on promoting gender equality, enhancing support systems, and creating inclusive

policies to facilitate the professional growth and success of women in Ghana's security service.

However, while women in leadership positions demonstrate resilience and determination in navigating these challenges, there are several research gaps that need to be addressed. These gaps include the need for research on intersectionality, career advancement and leadership opportunities, organizational culture and policies, support systems and resources, and best practices and policy interventions. Addressing these research gaps would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by women in Ghana's security service and inform evidence-based interventions and policy reforms to promote gender equality and inclusivity within the sector.

### **2.13 Opportunities for Women in Ghana's Security Sector**

The Ghanaian security sector presents a range of opportunities for women to contribute and excel. One notable opportunity is found in the Labour-Intensive Public Works program, where women are supported through on-site facilities and flexible employment (Dadzie, 2021). This program not only provides economic opportunities for women but also helps in addressing poverty and unemployment. However, it is important to recognize that women's contributions in the informal sector, including security-related roles, are often overlooked, hindering overall economic growth (Ganu, 2012).

In order to advance women's socio-economic status, it is crucial to involve them in decision-making processes within their communities. This inclusion allows women to have a voice in shaping policies and programs that directly impact their lives (Opare, 2005). By empowering women to participate actively in decision-making, their

perspectives and needs can be better addressed, leading to a more inclusive and equitable development outcomes.

Promoting gender parity in the fight against corruption is another opportunity for women in Ghana's Security Sector. When women are given equal opportunities to participate in anti-corruption efforts, they can become powerful change agents. Studies have shown that increasing women's representation in leadership roles can enhance transparency, accountability, and integrity (Kasser-Tee, 2020). Therefore, empowering women to actively engage in anti-corruption initiatives can contribute to more effective governance and promote gender equality simultaneously.

Historically, Ghana's Security Sector has been predominantly male-dominated, with women being underrepresented in various security agencies. However, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of gender diversity in the sector, leading to concerted efforts to increase the participation of women (Adu-Gyamfi & Fosu, 2017). Affirmative action policies, such as the implementation of quota systems, have been adopted to ensure the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in the sector. For instance, the Ghana Police Service has established a quota system that mandates the recruitment of a certain percentage of women into the service (ibid). These policies aim to address historical gender imbalances and create a more inclusive and diverse security sector.

In addition to affirmative action policies, the establishment of dedicated Gender Units within security agencies has played a crucial role in promoting gender equality and addressing issues related to gender-based violence (UN Women, 2018). These units are responsible for implementing policies and programs that support gender equality, enhance the welfare of women within the sector, and provide mechanisms for reporting and

addressing gender-based violence. The presence of these units acknowledges the specific challenges faced by women and demonstrates a commitment to creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

One notable success story within Ghana's Security Sector is the appointment of COP Beatrice Vib-Sanziri as the first female Deputy Inspector-General of Police in Ghana in 2018. Her appointment represents a significant milestone, not only for her personal achievement but also as a testament to the capabilities and potential of women in leadership positions within the sector (Sefa, 2019). The late Major General (posthumously) Constance Ama Edjeani became the first female Brigadier General of the GAF in 2016, the second and third being Education Officers, Brigadier Generals Felicia Twum Barima and Anita Asmah (KAIPTC, 2018). In fact, Anita Asmah served as the Deputy Force Commander of UN Disengagement Observer Force and now, Commodore Faustina Boakyewaa Anokye who is the first and highest-ranking female officer in the history of the Ghana Navy. After graduating from the Ghana Military Academy with a commission, she pursued further training at the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, United Kingdom.

Additionally, there is the Elsie Initiative Foundation (EIF), which attempts to “support and incentivize efforts to increase the meaningful participation of uniformed women in United Nations Peace Operations” to increase the meaningful presence of women in peacekeeping endeavours (MINURSO, 2023). The Canadian Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, Member States, the UN system, and peacekeeping professionals all provided support in the creation and implementation of the EIF, which is hosted by UN Women. To speed up the transformation of security institutions and allow more women in uniform to meaningfully deploy to and engage in peace operations, the Fund is a significant step

towards fostering and sponsoring innovation. It serves as an inspiration for other women aspiring to pursue careers in the security sector and highlights the importance of creating pathways for women to succeed and lead in traditionally male-dominated fields.

Women's groups and associations within the security agencies also provide valuable opportunities for women in Ghana's Security Sector. These groups serve as platforms for networking, mentorship, and mutual support among women in the sector. For example, the Ghana Army Women's Association and the Ghana Police Ladies Association have been instrumental in advocating for the welfare and advancement of women in their respective agencies (Sefa, 2019). These associations provide a supportive environment where women can share experiences, seek guidance, and collectively address common challenges. They play a crucial role in fostering camaraderie, encouraging professional development, and promoting the interests of women within the security sector.

Furthermore, women have been given the opportunity to participate in peacekeeping operations, both at the national and international levels. Ghana is recognized as one of the top contributors of peacekeeping troops to the United Nations, and women have been actively included in these missions. This participation not only enhances the skills and capabilities of women in the security sector but also promotes gender equality in peace and security efforts (United Nations, 2015). Women's involvement in peacekeeping missions helps to counter gender stereotypes and demonstrates the important role women can play in maintaining peace, security, and stability.

Despite the progress made, significant challenges persist, hindering the full participation of women in Ghana's Security Sector. Cultural attitudes and gender stereotypes continue to shape perceptions and expectations regarding women's roles in the society, including their involvement in security-related professions (Dery & Ampomah, 2020). These

attitudes can limit opportunities for women and create barriers to their advancement. Additionally, the lack of support from male colleagues and limited access to training and promotion opportunities further impede women's progress within the sector.

Nonetheless, there is an ongoing commitment to promoting gender diversity and inclusivity in Ghana's Security Sector. Efforts are being made to address these challenges and create a more supportive and inclusive environment for women in the sector. Various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners, are collaborating to implement initiatives that enhance gender equality and women's empowerment within the security sector.

One approach is focused on raising awareness and challenging cultural norms and stereotypes that limit women's participation in the sector. Educational campaigns and advocacy programs are being conducted to promote a more inclusive understanding of gender roles and to encourage the recognition of women's capabilities in security-related professions. By challenging societal perceptions, these initiatives aim to create an environment that values and supports women's contributions to the security sector.

Another crucial aspect is the provision of training and capacity-building opportunities for women in the security sector. Access to professional development programs, leadership training, and specialized skills training can equip women with the necessary knowledge and skills to excel in their roles. By investing in women's training and development, the sector can unlock their full potential and contribute to their professional growth and advancement.

Furthermore, partnerships and collaborations with international organizations and donors play a significant role in supporting gender mainstreaming efforts within Ghana's Security

Sector. These partnerships provide technical expertise, funding, and knowledge-sharing platforms to strengthen the capacity of security institutions to address gender-related challenges effectively. They also facilitate exchanges of best practices and experiences with other countries facing similar gender equality issues in their security sectors.

The importance of gender-responsive policies and legal frameworks cannot be overstated. It is essential to ensure that laws and regulations promote gender equality and protect women's rights within the security sector. By incorporating a gender perspective into policies, procedures, and practices, the sector can foster a more inclusive and equitable environment for women. Regular monitoring and evaluation of these policies are necessary to track progress, identify gaps, and make necessary adjustments to ensure their effectiveness.

In conclusion, while there are opportunities for women in Ghana's Security Sector, challenges such as cultural attitudes, gender stereotypes, lack of support, and limited access to training and promotion still need to be addressed. However, ongoing efforts to promote gender diversity, affirmative action policies, establishment of women's groups, and participation in peacekeeping operations demonstrate a commitment to advancing women's participation in the sector. By addressing these challenges and promoting gender equality, Ghana's Security Sector can harness the full potential of women, contributing to the promotion of peace, security, and development in the country.

#### **2.14 Gendered Power Dynamics and Career Trajectories**

Career progression within the GAF is structured through formal meritocratic frameworks, yet these frameworks are mediated by gendered assumptions that significantly influence women's professional trajectories. The most persistent barrier is the "brass ceiling," a term

that encapsulates the systemic and cultural obstacles that impede women's advancement to senior ranks (Carreiras, 2006). In Ghana, this ceiling manifests in several interconnected ways.

First, women are disproportionately assigned to roles considered "soft" or administrative, such as education, logistics, and health services. While these positions are essential to military functioning, they do not provide the operational experience required for promotion into high-ranking command roles. The promotion system rewards combat experience, deployment history, and command exposure domains from which women are often excluded due to gendered assumptions about their capabilities or emotional resilience. The result is a self-reinforcing cycle where women are denied operational opportunities, then later assessed as lacking the requisite experience for promotion.

Second, gendered stereotypes about pregnancy and family responsibilities significantly shape career trajectories. Multiple studies between 2020 and 2024 reveal that women are routinely passed over for promotion or deployment due to assumptions that they will take maternity leave, require flexible scheduling, or be less committed to long-term service (Aning & Okyere, 2022). Even when women demonstrate exceptional commitment, these stereotypes persist, revealing an institutional bias that frames femininity as incompatible with military leadership.

Third, leadership evaluation criteria are implicitly gendered. Assertiveness, command presence, and physical toughness are central to leadership assessments and are coded as masculine. Women who adopt these traits may be criticized as overly aggressive, while those who do not are deemed too soft, a phenomenon widely documented in gender leadership studies (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This double bind places female officers in an

impossible position, forcing them to navigate contradictory expectations that undermine their legitimacy in leadership roles.

Fourth, informal networks play an outsized role in advancement. Decisions about deployments, recommendations, and leadership opportunities often occur in informal male-dominated spaces such as sports clubs, mess facilities, and informal gatherings from which women are excluded. This exclusion from “old boys’ networks” limits their visibility and access to strategic information. According to Aning and Atuobi (2020), informal patronage and mentorship significantly influence advancement, reinforcing gender inequality even in otherwise merit-based systems.

Consequently, although few women have broken through to senior ranks, their success reflects individual resilience rather than structural equality. As long as promotion pathways remain tied to gendered operational roles, masculinized leadership criteria, and exclusionary networks, women’s career trajectories will continue to be constrained.

### **2.15 Policy Interventions and Persistent Gaps**

Ghana has made notable policy commitments aimed at improving gender inclusion in the security sector, yet the gap between policy and practice remains wide. The National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 outlines Ghana’s strategy to enhance women’s participation in peace and security, promote gender-sensitive training, and address gender-based violence within security institutions. In addition, Ghana participates in the Elsie Initiative, which seeks to increase the deployment of uniformed women in UN peace operations. Gender Desks have been established within security institutions to address complaints and monitor compliance with gender policies.

However, the implementation of these interventions is largely symbolic. Gender Desks are significantly under-resourced, lack trained personnel, and possess no enforcement authority. In many cases, personnel assigned to these desks consider the role secondary to their primary duties, undermining the seriousness of gender mainstreaming. Interviews from recent studies reveal that some military personnel view gender policies as external impositions rather than integral components of institutional professionalism (Dzreke, 2022).

Furthermore, Ghana has not institutionalized international best practices such as gender-audited physical standards, transparent promotion systems, or mandatory gender-sensitivity training for all ranks. Physical aptitude tests remain based on male averages, disadvantaging women and reinforcing perceptions of inferiority. Promotion decisions are often opaque, enabling subjective judgments that reproduce gender bias. Gender-sensitivity programs, where they exist, are delivered inconsistently and often treated as procedural formalities rather than tools for institutional transformation.

Another critical gap is the absence of accountability mechanisms. Policies exist, but violations are rarely punished, and discriminatory behaviours often go unreported due to fear of reprisal. This lack of accountability undermines the credibility of reforms and discourages women from seeking redress. Without sustained financial, institutional, and political commitment, gender policies will continue to function as symbolic gestures rather than meaningful pathways to equality.

## **2.16 Research Gaps and Contribution of This Study**

A review of current scholarly work reveals three major research gaps that this study seeks to address. First, most studies on gender and security in Ghana adopt quantitative or policy-

analytic approaches that focus on recruitment figures, structural barriers, or formal institutional frameworks (Aning & Lartey, 2018). While valuable, these studies do not capture the phenomenological dimension of women's lived experiences, how gendered structures are interpreted, embodied, and negotiated in everyday military life.

Second, there is a striking absence of qualitative, narrative-rich research on how GAF women experience gendered power. Existing qualitative work focuses heavily on the Ghana Police Service rather than the Armed Forces (Dabire et al., 2020). This leaves a significant gap in understanding how militarized hierarchies shape identity, agency, and emotional experiences within the GAF.

Third, scholarship rarely incorporates African feminist and context-specific theoretical frameworks. Instead, Western gender theories are often applied without sufficiently accounting for the sociocultural particularities of Ghanaian society. This creates a theoretical disconnect between lived realities and the analytical tools used to interpret them.

The present study responds to these gaps by foregrounding the phenomenological experiences of twenty-four (24) GAF service personnel and analysing their narratives through the Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism. This dual framework enables an exploration of how gendered power is both externally structured and internally interpreted. By centering lived experience, the study contributes to African feminist security studies and provides a grounded, Ghana-specific analysis of gendered military power.

## 2.17 Chapter Summary

This literature review has provided an overview of key themes relevant to the concept of “Interrogating Gender, Politics, Agency, and the Woman Question Beyond the ‘Gettier Problem’”. It has shed light on the historical exclusion of women from leadership and decision-making roles, as well as the ongoing discrimination and harassment they face based on their gender.

The role of gender in the security sector has significant implications for the experiences of women in security sector roles, the impact of gender on security sector performance, and the role of gender in decision-making processes. It is crucial to examine and understand the specific challenges and barriers that women encounter in the security sector, as well as the potential contributions they can make when given equal opportunities.

Phenomenological research in this context offers a valuable approach to gaining a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of women in the security sector. By exploring their perspectives, narratives, and daily challenges, this research can challenge and go beyond conventional ways of analysing gender, agency, and politics. It provides a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of how gender shapes individual experiences within the security sector.

Embracing intersectionality is essential in this exploration of gender, politics, agency, and the woman question. Intersectionality recognizes that individuals experience multiple interconnected social identities, such as gender, race, class, and sexuality, which intersect to shape their experiences and opportunities. By considering the intersecting dimensions of identity, scholars can better understand the unique challenges faced by women with

different backgrounds and experiences, and avoid essentializing or overlooking the diversity within the category of “women.”

Engaging with feminist perspectives is also crucial in this research area. Feminist theories and frameworks recognize and challenge the power imbalance and systemic inequalities that perpetuate gender discrimination. They provide analytical tools to examine the ways in which patriarchal structures and norms affect women's agency, rights, and opportunities. By applying feminist perspectives, scholars can contribute to more inclusive and empowering narratives that centre the experiences and voices of women and marginalized individuals.

However, this literature review also highlights the need for further research in this area. There are still pressing social issues related to gender, politics, and agency that require deeper exploration and analysis. Advancing gender equality on a global scale demands ongoing scholarly inquiry to uncover and address the root causes of gender discrimination and marginalization. By continuing to investigate and challenge existing frameworks, researchers can contribute to transformative change and promote a more equitable and inclusive security sector.

In summary, the chapter demonstrates that gender inequality in the GAF is not an accidental outcome of isolated discriminatory practices but a deeply sedimented condition produced through historical legacies, institutionalized military cultures, and enduring sociocultural norms. Although formal legal and policy barriers to women's participation have been gradually removed reflecting shifts in constitutional commitments, international gender norms, and Ghana's adherence to global peacekeeping standards, the persistence of informal structures continues to restrict women's full integration and progression within the Armed Forces. These structures are neither invisible nor abstract; they are enacted

daily through systems of meaning, routines of interaction, institutional symbols, and tacit assumptions that collectively reproduce gendered hierarchies. This is consistent with feminist institutionalist insights that formal rules may change without disrupting the “gendered logic of appropriateness” embedded within security organizations (Acker, 1990; Mackay et al., 2010). In the case of the GAF, such logics are powerfully shaped by the long-standing centrality of militarized masculinity, a cultural formation that links soldiering with male physicality, emotional stoicism, and combat readiness (Enloe, 2016; Duncanson, 2019). The chapter therefore situates contemporary gender inequality within these historically accumulated structures, demonstrating that the challenges women face is better understood as manifestations of deep structural and cultural continuities rather than as isolated institutional shortcomings.

The analysis reveals that militarized masculinity, as practiced and reproduced in the GAF, is not simply a set of behavioural expectations but a powerful regime of normativity that delineates who is perceived as naturally fit for military leadership and operational deployment. This aligns with existing scholarship showing that militarized institutions often define competence and authority in masculine terms, rendering femininity symbolically incompatible with command (Higate, 2003; Carreiras, 2006). In Ghana, this manifests through everyday practices including gender-biased role assignments, informal exclusion from elite operational units, scepticism about women’s physical capabilities, and persistent assumptions that women are better suited to administrative, medical, or educational functions within the military. Even when women meet or exceed performance standards, their achievements are often viewed as exceptions or attributed to perceived preferential treatment, reinforcing the sense that female participation is peripheral rather than integral to military professionalism. These dynamics reflect broader African sociocultural norms that privilege male authority in public institutions, which intersect

with organizational cultures to constrain women's career trajectories (Adjei & Mpiani, 2022). Thus, the chapter demonstrates that the GAF functions within a multi-layered gender order that operates simultaneously at the cultural, institutional, and interpersonal levels.

A major conclusion emerging from the review is that existing research has extensively documented the structural manifestations of gender inequality such as recruitment disparities, harassment, assignment biases, and slow promotion rates but these studies remain largely descriptive and lack phenomenological depth. They provide a map of the barriers but rarely explain how women themselves interpret, internalize, negotiate, or resist these barriers in the context of their lived experiences. Much of the literature remains policy-analytic, surveying gender mainstreaming frameworks, reporting statistical data, or evaluating the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. While valuable, such studies inadvertently reproduce a technocratic understanding of gender equality that foregrounds bureaucratic processes rather than lived realities (Basini & Ryan, 2016). In particular, they fail to capture what Acker (1990) calls the "embodiedness" of gendered organizations which talks about the ways gender is inscribed on women's bodies, behaviours, emotions, and identities within the military. Consequently, the subjective, affective, and psychological experiences of Ghanaian servicewomen remain underexplored.

The chapter therefore highlights a gap in the literature that is both empirical and epistemological. Empirically, there is a scarcity of qualitative research based on in-depth interviews, narrative testimonies, and ethnographic engagement with GAF women. Existing studies often rely on small samples, policy documents, or surface-level surveys that cannot fully capture the complexity of women's experiences in a highly stratified

institution. Epistemologically, there is a reliance on Western conceptual frameworks that may not adequately grasp the culturally specific ways gender operates within Ghanaian social and organizational contexts. For example, while Western militaries often grapple with issues of individualism versus gender equality, African militaries including Ghana's, must be understood within kinship networks, communal identities, and extended gender roles that shape women's obligations and self-perceptions (Mama, 1995; Ampofo, 2022). Thus, the gap is not merely a lack of research but a lack of context-sensitive, phenomenologically grounded inquiry that situates gender within Ghana's sociocultural and political environment.

The study addresses this gap by centering lived experiences as the primary epistemic entry point. Through 24 in-depth narrative accounts, it foregrounds the voices of servicewomen and servicemen who articulate their encounters with structural inequality in their own terms. This methodological orientation reflects the phenomenological tradition, which prioritizes subjectivity, meaning-making, and embodied experience as essential components of understanding social phenomena (Smith et al., 2009). It also resonates with African feminist epistemologies that emphasize lived experience, intersectionality, and contextual specificity as foundations for knowledge production (Tamale, 2020). By grounding analysis in women's narratives, the study moves beyond institutional descriptions and engages the deeper layers of consciousness, identity, aspiration, and affect that shape how gender is negotiated within the GAF.

In doing so, the analysis adopts a dual framework: the Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism. Psychopolitics allows for an exploration of how individuals internalize or resist institutional norms, how power operates through subjective experiences, and how emotions such as fear, pride, frustration, or defiance inform

women's decisions and identities (Stavrakakis, 2017). Social Constructivism, on the other hand, highlights how gendered meanings are produced, reproduced, and contested in everyday interactions within the military (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Together, these frameworks enable a deeper understanding of how structural power becomes embodied, how women craft agency within constraints, and how gender norms can be simultaneously upheld and subverted in routine military life. The chapter thus establishes the conceptual rationale for adopting a phenomenological and interpretivist approach, demonstrating its relevance to understanding the lived complexities of gender and power in Ghana's security sector.

Another central conclusion of the chapter is that achieving gender equality in the GAF requires more than policy commitments. While Ghana has adopted robust gender frameworks, including the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, and various gender mainstreaming policies, these commitments remain largely symbolic without accompanying cultural transformation. Gender Desks exist in name but lack resources, authority, or institutional visibility. Sensitivity training is sporadic rather than systematic, and promotion criteria often remain opaque. This is consistent with research on gender reforms in African security institutions, which shows that reforms frequently emphasize numerical inclusion without transforming underlying cultures of masculinity and power (Hendricks & Hutton, 2019). In the GAF, symbolic compliance allows the institution to appear aligned with global norms while avoiding substantive internal restructuring.

Meaningful reform therefore requires changes at multiple levels that are cultural, institutional, interpersonal, and structural. Culturally, it requires confronting militarized masculinity and redefining military professionalism in ways that value diverse skills,

including emotional intelligence, diplomacy, and strategic communication. Institutionally, it necessitates transparent promotion systems, gender-responsive training, accountability mechanisms, and leadership commitment. Interpersonally, it requires cultivating mentorship networks, addressing harassment, and promoting inclusive leadership practices. Structurally, it requires addressing broader societal norms that assign disproportionate caregiving responsibilities to women and therefore restrict their availability for deployment, training, or advanced military education. The chapter thus underscores that gender reform cannot be isolated from broader societal transformations, as military institutions reflect and reinforce the gender orders of the societies in which they exist.

In advancing these arguments, the chapter lays a conceptual and empirical foundation for the subsequent empirical analysis. It demonstrates the necessity of a phenomenological approach that listens to women's voices, interprets their experiences as meaningful social data, and captures the complex and sometimes contradictory ways they navigate gendered power within the military. Without this approach, analyses risk reproducing technocratic or policy-centric narratives that obscure the everyday realities through which inequality is lived and contested. The chapter thus situates the study within broader scholarly debates about gender and security while also asserting the importance of Ghana-specific, experience-based knowledge for informing both academic analysis and policy reform.

All said, the chapter argues that any genuine commitment to gender equality in the GAF must move beyond tokenistic inclusion toward structural accountability and cultural transformation. Policy reforms alone cannot dismantle entrenched gender norms or deeply institutionalized masculinities. Instead, the institution must adopt holistic approaches that integrate gender perspectives into training, leadership development, operational planning,

and organizational culture. Such reforms must be driven by evidence, grounded in lived experience, and supported by leadership at all levels. Only then can the GAF begin to move toward a more equitable, inclusive, and professional security sector that fully harnesses the contributions of all its personnel. By establishing these arguments, the chapter lays the groundwork for the empirical chapters that follow, demonstrating why a phenomenological lens is crucial for understanding the complexities of gender, identity, and power within Ghana's security sector.



## CHAPTER THREE (3)

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.0 Introduction

A theory is a well-substantiated explanation or framework that helps us understand and interpret certain phenomena or aspects of the world. It provides a systematic way of organizing and explaining observed facts, relationships, and patterns (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Theories are developed through rigorous research, analysis, and testing, and they serve as a foundation for generating hypotheses and conducting further investigations (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). This study investigates the political phenomenology of gender roles in the GAF through the lived experiences of female and male personnel. To interpret how institutional discourses, power structures, and everyday interactions shape gendered consciousness and professional agency, the research draws on two complementary theoretical lenses: the Theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism. This combined theoretical framework will enable a thorough exploration of the complex dynamics of gender roles within the GAF, shedding light on the political phenomenology of this important social issue. These frameworks were not selected arbitrarily, but as analytical tools directly responsive to the study's five objectives:

- (1) to examine how GAF pronouncements construct gender roles,
- (2) to explore how recruitment and boot camp shape gendered consciousness,
- (3) to understand how women negotiate identity,
- (4) to analyse how power dynamics influence career trajectories, and

(5) to propose context-specific reforms. This chapter explains the justification for each theory, demonstrates their synergistic application, and clarifies how they guide data analysis and interpretation.

### 3.1 Theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness

The theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness is a multidisciplinary concept that delves into the intricate interplay between psychology, politics, and human consciousness. To commence, the convergence of psychoanalysis and politics has garnered significant scholarly interest in recent years, as researchers delve into the potential of psychoanalytic political theory (Stavrakakis, 2019). Consequently, psychoanalysis has experienced a resurgence within the realm of global politics, particularly through the lens of Lacanian theory and its offshoots (Mandelbaum & Zevnik, 2021). However, the application of psychology to political psychology has sparked inquiries regarding the discipline's conceptual foundation and the idealization of community (Parker, 2015). Moreover, the relationship between psychoanalysis and political theory has been a topic of lively debate, with certain scholars urging caution against integrating their findings as mere resources (Rosen, 2007).

The Theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness explores how political systems, institutional discourses, and power structures shape individual and collective consciousness (Spira, 2022; Dyson, 2020). Originating in the intersection of psychoanalysis, critical theory, and political philosophy, the theory posits those dominant ideologies especially in hierarchical institutions like the military are not merely imposed from above, but internalized by individuals through repeated exposure to official pronouncements, training materials, and leadership narratives (Marcuse, 1964; Foucault, 1977).

On the other hand, the concept of consciousness has been approached from various perspectives. Marston (1926) proposed the psychonic theory, positing that consciousness arises from synaptic changes within neurons. Yakovlev (2020) expanded upon this notion, presenting a model of consciousness with different levels influenced by both internal and external factors. Yumatov (2021) introduced the psychogenic theory, which argues for the existence of a “psychogenic field” within the brain that reflects subjective states. In contrast, Burt (1962) criticized the emphasis on behaviour in psychology, advocating for the study of consciousness and the validity of introspection as an observational method.

Consequently, the theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness asserts that political systems and ideologies possess the ability to shape and manipulate the collective consciousness of individuals and societies in order to attain and preserve power. The origins of the Psychopolitics of Consciousness theory can be traced back to the intersection of various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, political science, and philosophy. Although there is no singular origin or definitive historical moment for the theory, it draws inspiration from the works of influential scholars who have explored the intricate relationship between psychology, politics, and human consciousness.

One foundational influence on the theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness is Sigmund Freud, the renowned psychoanalyst (as cited in Spira, 2022). Freud's exploration of the unconscious mind and his understanding of how individual psychology is shaped by societal forces laid the groundwork for understanding the influence of power on consciousness. His theories on the role of childhood experiences, repression, and the subconscious mind shed light on the ways in which external factors can shape individual and collective consciousness (ibid).

Another influential figure is Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who expanded upon Freud's work. Jung's concept of collective unconsciousness, which suggests that individuals share a common reservoir of archetypal images and symbols, added a dimension to understanding the ways in which societal and cultural influences shape consciousness (Hauke, 2012; Jung, 2012). His exploration of the relationship between individual and collective psychology provides insights into how political systems can tap into and manipulate collective consciousness.

In the field of political science, Michel Foucault's work has been instrumental in shaping the Psychopolitics of Consciousness theory. Foucault's analysis of power, knowledge, and discourse revealed how political systems exert control through various institutions, such as prisons, schools, and hospitals (Dyson, 2020). His concept of “biopower” explores how power operates on a societal level, regulating bodies and shaping subjectivities. Foucault's ideas shed light on how political systems influence and shape consciousness through disciplinary mechanisms and control over knowledge production.

Herbert Marcuse, a philosopher, and critical theorist, also contributed to the development of the theory (Kellner, 2013). Marcuse's analysis of advanced industrial societies and the role of ideology in maintaining social control highlighted the ways in which political systems shape consciousness to perpetuate the status quo. His critique of the “repressive tolerance” within capitalist societies drew attention to the ways in which dominant ideologies are manufactured and enforced (Abromeit & Cobb, 2014; Kellner, 2013).

The Psychopolitics of Consciousness theory emerged as a synthesis of these and other influential thinkers who explored the complex relationship between psychology, politics, and human consciousness. The theory seeks to understand how political systems and ideologies shape consciousness through mechanisms such as propaganda, mass media,

education, and the dissemination of ideologies (Abromeit & Cobb, 2014; Dyson, 2020; Kellner, 2013). By drawing on insights from various disciplines, it offers a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the ways in which power operates in the realm of consciousness.

The history behind the Psychopolitics of Consciousness theory is a testament to the ongoing exploration of the intricate connections between psychology, politics, and human consciousness.

In the context of the GAF, this theory directly addresses Objective 1: How do official GAF pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses construct and perpetuate gender roles? As Markwei et al. (2023) and Dery & Ampomah (2020) have documented, GAF leadership routinely valorises militarized masculinity emphasizing physical strength, stoicism, and combat readiness while rendering women's contributions invisible or auxiliary. These institutional practices do not merely reflect gender bias, they produce a gendered consciousness in which both men and women come to see male dominance as natural, inevitable, or even necessary for military effectiveness.

Female participants' accounts of internalized doubt, performance pressure, and strategic conformity (see Chapter 5) illustrate this process of ideological internalization. As one participant noted: "When the CDS speaks at Armed Forces Day, he talks about 'our brave soldiers' but never 'our brave female soldiers.'" Such erasure, repeated across rituals, manuals, and command culture, becomes part of the cognitive fabric of military life precisely what the Psychopolitics of Consciousness seeks to expose and analyse.

### 3.2 Characteristics of the Theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness

The theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness is characterized by its interdisciplinary approach, drawing insights from multiple fields such as psychology, sociology, political science, and philosophy. It recognizes the profound influence of power and control in shaping consciousness within a political context (Dyson, 2020; Melhado & Rabot, 2021). Political systems and institutions are seen as powerful agents that manipulate and shape collective perception through mechanisms such as propaganda, mass media, and education systems.

Moreover, a central focus of the theory is the recognition of ideologies and their role in shaping consciousness. Ideologies, whether political, religious, or cultural, provide frameworks of meaning and interpretation that influence how individuals perceive themselves and the world. Political actors disseminate and promote specific ideologies to influence values, aspirations, and behaviors, thus exerting control over consciousness (Abromeit & Cobb, 2014; Dyson, 2020; Kellner, 2013).

The theory also emphasizes the role of social institutions in shaping consciousness. Education systems, media organizations, and other societal institutions transmit information, values, and norms, influencing how individuals perceive and interpret the world (Dyson, 2020). Political actors can exert control or influence over these institutions to shape collective consciousness (ibid).

Within the framework of the Psychopolitics of Consciousness theory, critical analysis and awareness are cultivated. Individuals are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills and to be aware of the forces that shape their consciousness (French et al., 2020; Spira, 2022). By recognizing the mechanisms through which political systems and ideologies operate,

individuals can navigate the landscape of power and ideology with greater autonomy and agency (Melhado & Rabot, 2021).

It is important to note that the theory recognizes the dynamic and evolving nature of consciousness. Individuals are not passive recipients of political influence but have the capacity for critical analysis and independent thought (Dyson, 2020). The theory evolves over time as scholars and researchers continue to explore and refine its concepts.

### 3.3 Strength of the Theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness

The theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness offers valuable insights and strengths when examining the politics of gender roles in the GAF. This interdisciplinary theory draws from psychology, sociology, political science, and philosophy to analyse the complex relationship between power, consciousness, and political systems. By applying this theory, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how power dynamics influence gender roles within the military institution (Dyson, 2020; Melhado & Rabot, 2021).

Another strength of the theory is its focus on power dynamics. The military is a hierarchical institution where power plays a crucial role in determining roles, responsibilities, and opportunities. By analysing power dynamics, researchers can uncover how gender norms are constructed and maintained within the Armed Forces (Spira, 2022). They can explore how power is exercised to reinforce traditional gender roles or challenge them, shedding light on the experiences of men and women in the military.

The theory also highlights the influence of ideologies on shaping consciousness. In the context of gender roles, it is important to understand the ideologies and societal expectations that underpin traditional gender norms within the military and broader society. By applying the theory, researchers can examine how dominant ideologies

contribute to the construction and enforcement of gender roles within the GAF. This can involve analysing the narratives and discourses surrounding masculinity, femininity, and the military profession (Dyson, 2020; Spira, 2022).

Furthermore, the theory recognizes the role of social institutions in shaping consciousness. The military is an institutional setting with its own structures, policies, and practices. By employing the theory, researchers can investigate how these institutional factors influence gender roles within the Armed Forces (Rosen, 2007; Mandelbaum & Zevnik, 2021). They can examine recruitment and promotion policies, training programs, and the overall organizational culture to understand how they perpetuate or challenge gender disparities.

The theory also encourages critical analysis and awareness of the forces that shape consciousness. This is particularly relevant for researching gender roles in the military, as it allows for an exploration of the experiences, perspectives, and challenges faced by individuals who do not conform to traditional gender norms. By applying the theory, researchers can provide a platform for marginalized voices and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics within the Armed Forces (Mandelbaum & Zevnik, 2021).

Moreover, the theory offers a framework for policy recommendations. The insights gained from applying the theory can inform strategies to promote gender equality, challenge discriminatory practices, and create a more inclusive and equitable environment within the GAF. By understanding the mechanisms through which power operates and consciousness is shaped, researchers can propose policy interventions that address gender disparities and promote a more diverse and inclusive military institution (Dyson, 2020; Rosen, 2007).

In conclusion, the theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness provides valuable strengths for examining the politics of gender roles in the GAF. By analysing power dynamics, understanding ideological influences, examining institutional factors, considering discourses and narratives, encouraging critical analysis, and providing a framework for policy recommendations, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of gender dynamics within the military context.

### 3.4 Weakness of the Theory

The theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness, while offering valuable insights, is not without its weaknesses and limitations. One of the primary challenges of the theory lies in its complexity and ambiguity. It draws from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, political science, and philosophy, making it a multidimensional and intricate framework to apply in practice (Del Pin, et al., 2021). Additionally, the concept of consciousness itself is multifaceted and difficult to define precisely, which further adds to the complexity of the theory. The abstract nature of the theory and the subjective nature of consciousness can introduce ambiguity and make it challenging to establish clear causal relationships between political systems and consciousness (ibid).

Another weakness of the theory is the lack of empirical evidence to support its claims. While it provides a theoretical lens for understanding the influence of power and ideology on consciousness, empirical research and data are necessary to validate and strengthen its claims (Del Pin, et al., 2021). The theory often relies on qualitative analysis and conceptual frameworks, which can limit its applicability and generalizability without substantial empirical evidence to support its assertions.

Furthermore, the theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness tends to overemphasize power dynamics and the manipulation and control of consciousness by political actors. While power is undoubtedly an important factor in shaping consciousness, the theory may overlook other factors that contribute to the formation of consciousness. Individual agency, personal experiences, cultural influences, and broader societal dynamics are also influential in shaping consciousness but may not receive sufficient attention within the theory (Del Pin, et al., 2021).

The lack of contextual specificity is another weakness of the theory. Its general framework for understanding the relationship between politics and consciousness may not fully capture the nuances and unique dynamics of different cultural, social, and historical contexts (Del Pin, et al., 2021). The theory's applicability may vary across different societies and political systems, and its generalizability may be limited without careful consideration of local factors and specificities.

Additionally, the theory may not adequately address the intersectionality of various social identities and their impact on consciousness. While it primarily focuses on power and ideology, it may not fully account for how race, ethnicity, class, and other intersecting identities intersect with gender to shape experiences and opportunities within political systems. This limitation can hinder a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of consciousness in diverse social contexts.

Finally, the theory does not provide a prescriptive framework for addressing the issues it identifies. While it offers valuable insights into the dynamics of power and consciousness, it may not offer concrete guidance on how to address inequalities, challenge oppressive structures, or promote positive change within political systems. Researchers and

policymakers need to supplement the theory with additional frameworks and approaches to develop actionable strategies for change (Del Pin, et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness is not without its weaknesses. Its complexity and ambiguity, lack of empirical evidence, overemphasis on power dynamics, lack of contextual specificity, limited attention to intersectionality, and absence of a prescriptive framework are some of the limitations that need to be considered when applying and engaging with the theory. Recognizing these weaknesses can lead to a more critical and nuanced understanding of the dynamics of consciousness and power in political contexts.

### 3.5 Social Constructivism Theory

The theory of constructivism will be the complementary theory to the theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness. Social Constructivism is a perspective that emphasizes the role of social interactions, language, and shared meanings in shaping individual and collective consciousness (Kiraly, 2014).

By focusing on the social construction of knowledge, Social Constructivism provides a framework that is more accessible and less complex than the multidimensional nature of the Psychopolitics of Consciousness theory. It recognizes that consciousness is not solely influenced by political systems and power dynamics but is also shaped by social interactions, cultural norms, and historical contexts.

Social Constructivism asserts that reality, especially social categories like gender, is constructed through ongoing interaction, discourse, and cultural practice (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Butler, 1990). Gender is not biologically fixed but performed, negotiated, and contested in everyday life. This theory complements psychopolitics by

shifting focus from top-down ideological control to micro-level social processes, how individuals actively interpret, resist, or reproduce gender norms through relationships, language, and behaviour.

Unlike the lack of empirical evidence in the Psychopolitics of Consciousness theory, Social Constructivism has a stronger empirical basis. It encourages researchers to examine the social processes and interactions through qualitative and quantitative research methods. This empirical grounding strengthens the theory and enables a more robust analysis of the relationship between society, politics, and consciousness (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Kiraly, 2014).

Moreover, Social Constructivism acknowledges the intersectionality of various social identities and how they intersect with power dynamics. It recognizes that individuals' consciousness is influenced not only by political ideologies but also by their social location, including factors such as race, gender, and class (Amineh & Asl, 2015). This perspective allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of consciousness within diverse social contexts.

Social Constructivism also offers a more context-specific approach. It recognizes that consciousness is shaped by the unique cultural, social, and historical contexts within which individuals and communities are situated (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Kiraly, 2014). This contextual sensitivity allows for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of consciousness and avoids generalizations that may oversimplify complex social realities.

Additionally, Social Constructivism provides a prescriptive framework for addressing the issues it identifies. It highlights the importance of promoting inclusive dialogue, challenging dominant narratives, and creating spaces for diverse perspectives to be heard.

By focusing on the construction of knowledge and meaning, it offers actionable strategies for promoting positive change within political systems and society at large.

Social Constructivism directly supports Objective 3: How do female personnel negotiate professional identities and challenge traditional gender norms? Participants described strategic identity work: asserting competence through exceptional performance while carefully managing perceptions of femininity (Appiah & Kyeremeh, 2019). They form support networks (e.g., Ghana Army Women’s Association) to share coping strategies and validate their experiences a form of collective meaning-making that counter institutional marginalization. They also engage in everyday resistance, refusing to conform to submissive feminine ideals, advocating for policy change, and mentoring younger women (Ampofo, 2019).

Crucially, this theory acknowledges that agency is relational shaped by interactions with male colleagues, superiors, and institutional gatekeepers. As one participant stated: “People in the Armed Forces, men and women, should try to be supportive... it is difficult.” Social Constructivism explains how such interpersonal dynamics co-construct gendered realities, even in rigidly hierarchical settings.

In brief, Social Constructivism presents an alternative theory that addresses some of the weaknesses of the Psychopolitics of Consciousness theory. Its emphasis on social interactions, empirical grounding, attention to intersectionality, context specificity, and prescriptive framework can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of consciousness and power in political contexts.

### 3.6 Synergistic Application of the Two Theories

While the Theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness reveals how macro level power structures shape consciousness, Social Constructivism illuminates how micro-level interactions enable resistance and redefinition. Together, they provide a multi-scalar analytical framework that avoids the trap of either structural determinism (women as passive victims) or methodological individualism (agency as purely personal choice).

Table 1. **Synergistic Application of the Two Theories**

Level of Analysis	Psychopolitics of Consciousness	Social Constructivism
Source of Gender Norms	Institutional ideology (e.g., GAF pronouncements)	Social interaction and discourse
Mechanism	Internalization of hegemonic masculinity	Performance and negotiation of identity
Agency	Limited, constrained by ideology	Active, relational, context-dependent
Empirical Focus	Recruitment criteria, training manuals, promotion boards	Peer relationships, mentorship, daily resistance

This synergy allows the study to answer Objective 4 (How do gendered power dynamics influence career trajectories?) and Objective 5 (What reforms promote gender equity?) by showing how systemic barriers (psychopolitical) intersect with individual strategies (constructivist) to produce complex outcomes.

### 3.7 Justification for Theoretical Selection

These theories were chosen for three key reasons:

1. Phenomenological Compatibility: Both theories centre on lived experience and meaning-making, aligning with the study's phenomenological design.
2. Contextual Relevance: They account for African military contexts where formal equality coexists with deep-seated cultural patriarchy (Aning et al., 2021).

3. Analytical Power: They move beyond descriptive gender inequality to explain how and why gender norms persist and how they might be transformed.

Unlike Western liberal feminist frameworks that assume individual autonomy, these theories recognize that consciousness and identity are shaped within fields of power making them uniquely suited to analyse the GAF's opaque, hierarchical culture.

### 3.8 Operationalization in Data Analysis

In Chapter 5 (Data Analysis), these theories guided deductive coding (using theory-derived constructs) and inductive theme development (allowing new insights to emerge).

For example:

1. Psychopolitical Codes: “Ideological Internalization,” “Institutional Discourse,” “Hegemonic Masculinity”
2. Constructivist Codes: “Identity Negotiation,” “Peer Resistance,” “Collective Support”

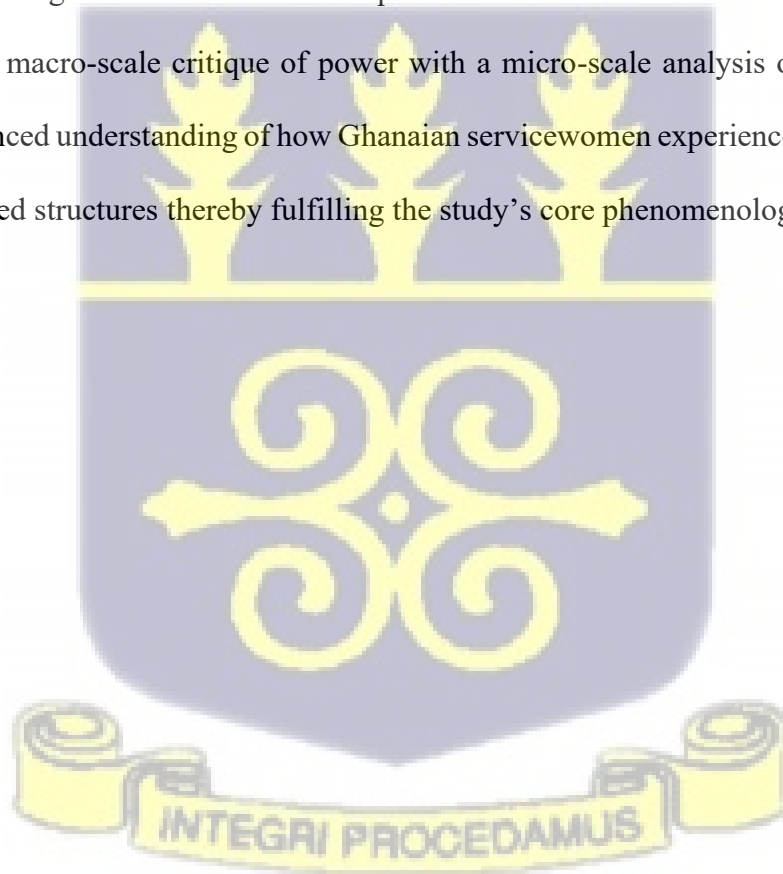
Themes were cross-verified through peer debriefing and member checking to ensure analytical rigor. This mixed approach inductive in origin, deductive in interpretation ensured that the theories illuminated but did not overwrite participant voices.

### 3.9 Chapter Summary

The study titled “The Political Phenomenology of Gender Roles in Security Agencies: The GAF in Perspective” utilizes the theories of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism to examine the dynamics of gender roles within the GAF. The theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness helps to understand how political ideologies, policies, and organizational structures shape individual and collective consciousness, particularly

regarding gender roles. The complementary theory of Social Constructivism emphasizes the role of social interactions, language, and shared meanings in constructing gender roles and identities. By combining these theories, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the political phenomenology of gender roles in the GAF, considering the interplay between political processes, power dynamics, social interactions, and cultural influences within the security agency.

This chapter has established that the Theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism provide a robust, coherent framework for analysing the political phenomenology of gender in the GAF. Far from being abstract, these theories directly inform every stage of the research from question formulation to data interpretation. By combining a macro-scale critique of power with a micro-scale analysis of agency, they enable a nuanced understanding of how Ghanaian servicewomen experience, interpret, and resist gendered structures thereby fulfilling the study's core phenomenological mission.



## CHAPTER FOUR (4)

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.0 Introduction

The introduction provides an overview of the research methodology used in a phenomenological study. Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that aims to understand the lived experiences of individuals (Denzin et al., 2023). It focuses on exploring the meaning that individuals assign to their experiences and how these experiences shape their perceptions, beliefs, and behaviours. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology used in a phenomenological study. This chapter deals with the methodology of the study which includes the study design, population, sample and sampling technique, research instruments, validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection, data analyses procedures and ethical consideration.

#### 4.1 Research Paradigm

This study is grounded in the phenomenological research paradigm, which seeks to understand the essence of lived human experience (Denzin et al., 2023; Van Manen, 2023). Phenomenology is particularly suited to this inquiry because it prioritizes subjective meaning-making allowing participants to articulate how they interpret, navigate, and resist gendered structures within the GAF.

Unlike positivist approaches that seek generalizable laws, phenomenology embraces contextual depth, emotional nuance, and narrative complexity. This paradigm enabled the researcher to move beyond descriptive accounts and uncover the political phenomenology of gender, how power, ideology, and institutional discourse shape consciousness and

agency. As Denzin et al. (2023, p. 112) note, “Phenomenology gives voice to the silent, the marginalized, and the taken-for-granted.”

Paradigms impact research questions, methods, relationships, knowledge production, and ethics. Understanding paradigms helps researchers make informed decisions and contribute to knowledge in their field. The research paradigm selected for this study is phenomenology. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach that aims to comprehend and describe the subjective experiences and meanings of individuals (Davies & Fisher, 2018; Denzin et al., 2023). It emphasizes the exploration of the essence and structure of lived experiences, highlighting the perspectives and interpretations of participants in relation to a specific phenomenon.

The choice of phenomenology as the research paradigm is justified based on several key factors (Davies & Fisher, 2018). Firstly, phenomenology allows for a comprehensive exploration of the lived experiences of individuals within the GAF. By adopting this approach, the study seeks to understand how gender roles are subjectively experienced, perceived, and interpreted by those directly involved in security agencies. Phenomenology enables researchers to uncover the nuances and intricacies of these experiences, providing a rich and detailed account of participants' perspectives (Davies & Fisher, 2018; Denzin et al., 2023).

Moreover, phenomenology recognizes the significance of subjectivity and meaning in human experiences. It acknowledges that individuals interpret and attribute meaning to their experiences based on their unique backgrounds, cultural contexts, and social interactions. By employing a phenomenological inquiry, researchers can gain insights into the diversity of meanings associated with gender roles in the Armed Forces. This approach sheds light on the multifaceted nature of these roles and contributes to a more nuanced

understanding of gender dynamics within security agencies (Davies & Fisher, 2018; Qutoshi, 2018).

Thirdly, phenomenology emphasizes the importance of understanding experiences within their specific contexts. In the context of this study, the chosen paradigm allows for an exploration of the political phenomenology of gender roles in the GAF, considering the socio-political factors, power dynamics, and organizational structures that shape and influence these roles (Denzin et al., 2023). This contextual understanding is crucial for comprehending the complexities of gender dynamics within security agencies and provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Furthermore, phenomenological research methods, such as in-depth interviews and the river of life analysis, facilitate a profound exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions. These methods capture detailed narratives, emotions, and subjective interpretations, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The richness of data obtained through phenomenology enables a nuanced analysis and interpretation of gender roles within the GAF.

Lastly, the choice of phenomenology aligns with a human-centered approach to research. It places the human experience at the forefront, giving priority to the voices and perspectives of individuals (Denzin et al., 2023). By adopting a phenomenological approach, this study aims to amplify the voices of those serving in the Armed Forces, providing them with an opportunity to share their experiences, challenges, and aspirations related to gender roles.

## 4.2 Research Design

The research design is essential for a successful study, providing structure, validity, and reliability (Creswell, & Clark, 2011). For this study on gender roles in the GAF, a qualitative research design informed by phenomenology was chosen. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of subjective experiences and meanings (Creswell, 2014). It captures the complexities of gender roles through methods like interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Phenomenology was selected as the theoretical framework due to its focus on understanding lived experiences. It recognizes the significance of subjectivity and meaning, considering individuals' unique backgrounds and social interactions (Creswell, 2014; Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). This study aims to uncover diverse meanings associated with gender roles, contributing to a nuanced understanding.

Qualitative research offers contextual insights by exploring socio-political factors, power dynamics, and organizational structures. It considers how broader societal and institutional factors influence gender roles within the Armed Forces. The flexibility of qualitative research allows for adjustments based on emerging themes, ensuring comprehensive exploration, and capturing diversity.

The collection of rich and detailed data is facilitated through in-depth interviews, allowing participants to express their experiences. Observations and document analysis add depth to the data. Thematic analysis is employed to identify recurring patterns and themes related to gender roles. This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the political phenomenology of gender roles.

By analyzing the data, researchers aim to identify key factors and dynamics shaping gender roles (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). This contributes to informed discussions and potential interventions for promoting gender equality and inclusivity within security agencies.

Thus, the chosen qualitative research design, informed by phenomenology, provides a well-planned and focused approach for exploring gender roles in the GAF. It captures subjective experiences, contextual factors, and recurring themes, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, and facilitating discussions on gender equality and inclusivity.

A qualitative phenomenological design was adopted, using semi-structured in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method. This design aligns with the study's aim to explore how GAF personnel experience, interpret, and respond to gendered power structures in their daily professional lives.

The design allowed for:

1. Rich, first-person narratives on topics such as recruitment, boot camp, leadership, and work-life balance.
2. Emergent thematic development through iterative data analysis.
3. Theoretical sensitivity to the frameworks of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism.

#### 4.3 Source of Data Collection

The primary data collection method for this study is phenomenological interviews with individuals in various roles within the GAF. Phenomenological interviews were chosen

because they capture rich and detailed accounts of participants' experiences and perceptions of gender roles (Denzin et al., 2023). These interviews allow for in-depth exploration, using open-ended questions to delve into nuances, emotions, and meanings associated with gender roles.

Phenomenological interviews prioritize participants' perspectives, giving them an active role in shaping the narrative. Participants are encouraged to express their thoughts, beliefs, and experiences, resulting in an authentic representation of their realities (Denzin et al., 2023; Van Manen, 2023). This approach aligns with the aim of understanding subjective meanings and interpretations. These interviews generate qualitative data that captures the essence of participants' experiences. The open-ended nature allows for detailed accounts, personal stories, and expressions of emotions. This data provides a nuanced understanding of the political phenomenology of gender roles in the Armed Forces.

Phenomenological interviews offer context-specific insights into gender dynamics. By engaging directly with individuals, researchers gain firsthand accounts of interactions and experiences. This contextual understanding is valuable for exploring sociopolitical factors, power dynamics, and cultural influences (Denzin et al., 2023).

Personal narratives accessed through phenomenological interviews provide unique perspectives on individuals' journeys, motivations, and challenges related to gender roles. Understanding individual narratives helps uncover broader patterns and themes within the Armed Forces.

While other data collection methods like surveys or archival data may provide quantitative or historical information, they may not capture lived experiences and subjective meanings as effectively. The choice of phenomenological interviews ensures a deep exploration of

participants' perspectives, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the political phenomenology of gender roles in the GAF.

Primary data were collected through twenty-four (24) in-depth interviews with GAF personnel (14 females, 10 males), each lasting 60 - 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A), which included prompts on:

1. Experiences with GAF pronouncements (e.g., CDS speeches at Armed Forces Day).
2. Perceptions of boot camp (initial 6-9 months training at Ghana Military Academy).
3. Navigating everyday gendered interactions.
4. Views on promotion, leadership, and institutional reform.

All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and later transcribed verbatim. No secondary data were used in analysis; all claims are grounded in participant narratives.

#### **4.4 Setting of the Study**

The setting of a study plays a crucial role in providing context and understanding the environmental and social factors that may influence research findings. In this study, the research was conducted within the GAF, with the primary focus being Burma Camp. Burma Camp serves as the General Headquarters of the GAF, led by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), Lieutenant General Thomas Oppong-Peprah. Additionally, it houses the Ghana Army Headquarters (Army HQ) under the leadership of Major General Bismarck Kwasi Onwona, the Ghana Navy Headquarters (NHQ) headed by Rear Admiral Issah Adam Yakubu, and the Ghana Air Force Headquarters (AFHQ) led by Air Vice Marshal Frederick Asare Bekoe.

Burma Camp accommodates various units, directorates, and services within its premises. These include the Directorate Legal Services, Logistics, Support Services, Medical, Education, Training, Military Records, Religious Affairs, International Peace Support Operations, Information Technology, Provost Marshal, Communication and Information Services, Defence Finance Controller, Defence Intelligence, Development and Procurement, Inspector General's Department, Public Relations, Special Forces Brigade, Armoured Reconnaissance Brigade, Signal Brigade, and several other departments. Furthermore, there are four tri-service units, namely the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KA IPTC), the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College (GAF CSC), the Ghana Armed Forces Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), and the Ghana Military Academy (GMA). Additionally, there are seven garrisons located in Tema, Takoradi, Sunyani, Kumasi, Burma Camp, Tamale, and Ho. The Ghana Navy has three bases, namely the Eastern Naval Base in Tema, the Western Naval Base in Takoradi, and the Naval Trade Training School in Sogakope. Similarly, the Ghana Air Force has three bases, namely the Air Force Base in Accra, the Air Force Base in Takoradi, and the Air Force Base in Tamale. These military bases in Ghana served as the locations for the study investigating the political phenomenology of gendered roles in the military.

Burma Camp is noteworthy as the headquarters of the Ghana Armed Forces and serves as the primary training and administrative base for the military. The camp is predominantly male dominated, with women constituting a small percentage of the military personnel. Women in the military face distinct challenges related to their gender, including discriminatory practices and gendered expectations regarding their roles and responsibilities (Ghana Armed Forces, 2020). Conducting the study within the setting of Burma Camp, Takoradi, and Tamale provides a unique opportunity to explore the political

phenomenology of gendered roles in a military environment. The study aims to investigate how gendered expectations and practices shape the experiences of male and female military personnel and contribute to gender-based discrimination and inequalities. It also seeks to explore how military personnel negotiate and resist these gendered roles and expectations, as well as the impact of these processes on their mental health and well-being.

In conclusion, data was collected from three GAF Garrisons namely; Burma Camp (Accra), Tamale, and Takoradi. These sites were selected to ensure geographic and service-branch diversity (Army, Navy, Air Force). Burma Camp, as the GAF General Headquarters, houses all three service branches and key training institutions (e.g., GMA, GAFCSO), making it a strategic locus for understanding institutional culture. Understanding how gendered practices and expectations influence the experiences of military personnel is crucial for developing effective interventions to address gender-based discrimination and promote gender equality.

#### **4.5 Target Population**

The target population is the specific group of individuals or entities that the researcher aims to study and generalize findings about. It is relevant to research work as it ensures representativeness, generalizability, guides sampling, aligns with research objectives, and considers practical considerations (Creswell, 2014). Selecting an appropriate target population is crucial for conducting meaningful and applicable research.

The target population for this study consists of individuals currently serving in the GAF, encompassing both male and female personnel. The selection of this target population is

grounded in the aim of gaining academic insights into the political phenomenology of gender roles within the Armed Forces from the perspectives of those directly involved.

Including individuals from various roles and ranks within the GAF is essential to ensure a comprehensive understanding of gender roles in the organization. By involving participants from different positions, such as officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted or recruited personnel, the study can capture a diverse range of experiences, perspectives, and power dynamics related to gender roles. This diversity enhances the validity and generalizability of the study findings, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of the complex interplay between gender and organizational dynamics.

Moreover, including both male and female personnel is crucial as it recognizes the significance of gender diversity and acknowledges that gender roles are not limited to one gender. Gender is a socially constructed concept that influences expectations, behaviors, and interactions within organizations. By including individuals from different genders, the study can explore how gender roles are constructed, experienced, and negotiated within the GAF. This contributes to a more inclusive and comprehensive analysis, highlighting the gendered experiences and challenges faced by individuals in their respective roles.

The choice of targeting individuals currently serving in the GAF offers several academic advantages. Firstly, it allows for a real-time understanding of the dynamics and experiences related to gender roles within the organization. By engaging with current personnel, the study can capture the contemporary context and any evolving dynamics or policies related to gender roles. This temporal relevance enhances the applicability of the study findings to the current organizational landscape.

Secondly, involving individuals who are actively serving in the Armed Forces provides an opportunity to explore the practical implications and challenges of gender roles within the organizational context. Participants can provide insights into the day-to-day experiences, interactions, and expectations related to their gender roles, shedding light on the lived realities within the GAF. This empirical understanding adds depth and richness to the study, allowing for a more robust analysis of gender dynamics within the organization.

To end with, targeting individuals currently serving in the Armed Forces establishes a direct link between the research findings and potential implications for policy and practice. By engaging with those actively involved in the organization, the study findings can inform discussions and interventions aimed at promoting gender equality, inclusivity, and positive change within the GAF. This practical relevance contributes to the scholarly significance of the study, as it has the potential to influence policy decisions and organizational practices related to gender roles.

The target population comprised GAF personnel with 3+ years of service, ensuring they had sufficient experience to reflect meaningfully on gendered dynamics. This included officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted personnel from combat, support, and administrative roles.

#### **4.6 Sampling Techniques**

Sampling technique plays a crucial role in research design as it involves selecting a representative subset of the population for the study (Babbie, 2016). Various sampling techniques exist, and the selection of a method depends on factors such as the research question, population characteristics, and available resources. In this study, the key sampling technique employed is chain link purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling, commonly used in phenomenological research (Creswell, 2013), was utilized to select participants who have first-hand experience with the phenomenon of interest and are willing to share their experiences. To ensure the study's focus and relevance to the research question, inclusion and exclusion criteria were clearly defined. The inclusion criteria specified that participants should have experienced the phenomenon under investigation and possess the ability to provide detailed descriptions of their experiences. Conversely, the exclusion criteria encompassed individuals who were unable or unwilling to provide detailed descriptions.

In addition to purposive sampling, the study incorporated a non-probability sampling technique called chain-link sampling (Elhalifa et al., 2020). This approach addressed the challenge of reaching individuals with specific characteristics, such as career women in the GAF. Chain link purposive sampling starts with one or more initial study participants who meet the inclusion criteria. These participants are then asked to recommend other individuals who share similar experiences or characteristics. This iterative process continues, with each newly recruited participant suggesting additional potential participants. The procedure is repeated until the desired sample size is achieved or a saturation point is reached, where new participants no longer contribute novel information.

Chain link purposive sampling not only helps in identifying suitable participants but also aids in determining the sampling size (Elhalifa et al., 2020; Parker, et al., 2019). As the recommendations from existing participants are solicited, the sample gradually expands. The process continues until the desired sample size is attained, ensuring that the study incorporates enough participants who have relevant experiences and perspectives on the phenomenon of interest. Additionally, the inclusion of a saturation point in the sampling

process ensures that data collection ceases when new participants no longer provide additional insights, enhancing the efficiency and quality of the study (Parker, et al., 2019).

To summarize, this study employed chain link purposive sampling as the primary sampling technique. Through the recommendations of initial participants, the sample gradually expanded to encompass individuals with specific characteristics, such as career women in the GAF. This approach allowed for the selection of participants who possess firsthand experience with the phenomenon under investigation and who can provide detailed descriptions. Moreover, chain link purposive sampling facilitated the determination of the sampling size by iteratively recruiting participants until the desired sample size was achieved or a saturation point was reached.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants with relevant lived experience. Initial participants were identified through professional networks, and chain-referral sampling (Elhalifa et al., 2020) was used to recruit additional participants. This approach was necessary due to the GAF's institutional secrecy and low visibility of female personnel in leadership.

**Inclusion Criteria:**

1. Minimum 3 years of service in the GAF.
2. Willingness to discuss gender-related experiences.
3. Ability to provide detailed, reflective accounts.

**4.7 Sample Size Determination**

In phenomenological studies, the focus is on gaining a rich and in-depth understanding of the experience being investigated. As a result, a smaller sample size can be sufficient to

achieve the study's objectives (Creswell, 2013). Typically, phenomenological studies involve sample sizes ranging from 5 to 25 participants, depending on the study's scope and the richness of the data obtained from each participant (Creswell, 1998). However, for this study, participants were recruited until data saturation was achieved. Data saturation occurs when new information or insights cease to emerge from additional participants, indicating that a sufficient understanding of the phenomenon has been reached (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). This approach ensures that the sample size is determined by the point at which no new information is being generated, rather than a predetermined number of participants.

The initial participants were approached from various units within the GAF, including the Ghana Army (such as the 5 Infantry Battalion, Armoured Reconnaissance Brigade, and Support Services Brigade), the Ghana Navy (including the Executive Branch, Administration/Supply, and Technical Branch), and the Ghana Air Force (including Pilots, Administration/Supply, and the Technical Branch at Air Force Base, Tamale, and Air Force Headquarters). By including participants from different branches and units, the study aims to capture a diverse range of perspectives and experiences related to gender roles within the GAF.

This approach of recruiting participants until data saturation is achieved allows for a comprehensive exploration of the research topic, ensuring that the study captures a sufficient understanding of the political phenomenology of gender roles within the Armed Forces.

In summary, twenty - four (24) participants were interviewed (14 females, 10 males). Thematic saturation was done at the point at which no new themes emerged. The saturation point was reached at participant #22. Two additional interviews were conducted to confirm

stability of findings. This sample size aligns with phenomenological best practices (Guest et al., 2006; Creswell, 1998).

Table 2. **Study Participants Segregation**

<b>Participant Category</b>	<b>Number</b>
Female Officers	9
Female Soldiers	5
Male Officers	6
Male Soldiers	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

#### **4.8 Method of Data Collection**

The method of data collection used in this study is the River of Life approach, which was employed to gather comprehensive and in-depth insights into the political phenomenology of gender roles within the GAF. This approach facilitated the exploration of participants' lived experiences, perspectives, and narratives surrounding gender roles in the military, allowing for a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Denov & Shevell, 2021). The River of Life approach is a qualitative data collection method that encourages participants to reflect on their personal journeys and experiences related to the topic of interest (Denov & Shevell, 2021; Shahrokh et al., 2015). It provides a structured framework for participants to share significant life events, challenges, achievements, and transformations, allowing for a rich and contextual exploration of the research topic.

The data collection process using the River of Life approach involved the following steps:

1. **Participant Selection:** Participants were selected using a combination of purposive sampling and the chain link sampling technique. Purposive sampling ensured that individuals with relevant experiences and perspectives on gender roles in the GAF were included. The chain link sampling technique further facilitated the recruitment of participants with specific characteristics, such as career women in the military, by

leveraging recommendations from existing participants. This sampling approach aimed to capture a diverse range of viewpoints and experiences.

2. **Introduction to the River of Life Approach:** Participants were provided with an overview of the River of Life approach and its purpose in exploring their personal journeys related to gender roles in the GAF. They were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses to encourage open and honest sharing.
3. **Individual Interviews:** One-on-one interviews were conducted with each participant to delve into their personal narratives using the River of Life framework. Participants were encouraged to reflect on significant life events, experiences, and turning points related to gender roles within the military. The interviews were conducted in a supportive and non-judgmental manner, allowing participants to express their thoughts and emotions freely.
4. **Visualization and Mapping:** During the interviews, participants were provided with visual aids, such as a timeline diagram, to visually represent their life journeys. They were asked to map out their experiences, highlighting key events, challenges, and transitions related to gender roles in the GAF. This visual representation aided participants in reflecting on the temporal and transformative aspects of their experiences.
5. **Probing and Clarification:** Throughout the interviews, the researcher probed for additional details, sought clarification, and encouraged participants to elaborate on specific aspects of their narratives. This helped to gather in-depth and nuanced information, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the political phenomenology of gender roles in the military.
6. **Saturation Point:** The data collection process continued until a saturation point was reached, where new interviews no longer provided novel information or insights.

Saturation ensured that a sufficient depth and breadth of data were obtained, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon under investigation.

7. Data Recording and Transcription: The interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent, and detailed notes were taken during and after each interview to capture non-verbal cues and observations. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, ensuring accuracy in preserving participants' narratives.

The River of Life approach as the method of data collection in this study facilitated the exploration of participants' lived experiences and perspectives on gender roles in the GAF. It provided a structured framework for participants to reflect on their personal journeys, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the political phenomenology of gender roles within security agencies.

Data were collected via semi-structured interviews. The interview guide was pilot-tested and refined for clarity. Questions included:

1. “How do official GAF pronouncements shape your understanding of gender roles?”
2. “Describe your boot camp experience, did you feel it was designed with women in mind?”
3. “Have you ever been denied a promotion or assignment due to your gender?”

Interviews were conducted in English (the GAF's official language) and held in private, neutral locations to ensure confidentiality.

#### 4.9 Presentation and Analysis of Data

The data collected is presented in themes and subsequently thematic analysis of the data was made. In a phenomenological study, thematic analysis is the most common method of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Data analysis involves analysing the data collected from the participants to identify themes and patterns. Thematic analysis involves identifying patterns and themes in the data that are relevant to the research question. The researcher transcribes the audio recordings of the interviews. To conduct phenomenological analysis, the researcher reads and rereads the transcribed interviews to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences. The researcher then extracts significant statements or phrases from the transcripts, which are referred to as “meaning units” (van Manen, 2014). These meaning units are then grouped together based on similarities and differences to form clusters, which are referred to as “themes. The researcher then codes the data by identifying themes and patterns. Once the codes are identified, the researcher groups them into broader themes that are used to answer the research question.

The researcher first and foremost read through all the data to identify the common issues that recurred in the responses given and identified the main themes that summarized all the stories and views I had collected. The themes established to reflect the interview questions which were meant to gather information that hovered around the objectives of the research. Apart from the themes taking after the recurrent issues in the responses given, they were also guided by the themes that run through the literature review. It should be borne in mind the themes of the literature review, themselves, were guided by the research objectives. Each theme was explored making the link between themes of the literature review/theories and verbatim examples from the data collected. In this way, the categories

allowed for easy theorizing along the themes. According to Etherington (2007), this kind of data collection and analysis could lead to memorable, interesting knowledge that brings together layers of understandings about a person, their culture and how they have created change. He further maintains that knowledge gained in this way is situated, transient, partial and provisional; characterized by multiple voices, perspectives, truths and meanings. Stories can be viewed as a window unto a knowable reality and analysed using concepts derived from theory e.g., thematic analysis, or concepts derived from the data e.g., grounded theory usually referred to as ‘analysis of narratives’ (Polkinghorne, 1988.; Bleakley, 2005).

In the analysis, the Grounded Theory Methodology (G.T.M) was used as a guide. All responses given on a particular question were written down until the full script was in hand. After this exercise, the researcher read through all the scripts as pointed out earlier to establish themes. The study then commented on the literal meaning of the response and further moved to its implications as far as gendered roles within the GAF was concerned. The researcher weighed the most pressing issues against the themes of the literature review and the theories discussed under Chapters Two and Three of the work. In this way, the researcher could establish clearly the implications of each major response given on a question asked as far as the perception, culture, life outside the GAF, coping mechanisms, as well as violations on their roles as women in the GAF are concerned. This allowed the researcher to theorize accordingly. Quotes from participants were used to buttress a particular deduction made by the researcher from a response given by the participants.

Glaser and Straus (1967) stressed the uniqueness of the grounded theory method by its concurrent involvement in data collection and analysis. As mentioned earlier, Grounded theorists have the flexibility to collect data from the field and start their analysis

immediately, then go forward and backward between the data analysis and the field to collect further data in order to develop their substantive theory (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007).

Qualitative researchers share a similar goal in that they desire a methodology that allows them to arrive at an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it (Woodgate, 2000). The methodology of grounded theory helped the researcher to understand participants' behaviour, regardless of their cultural background, from a social interaction perspective. In other words, this methodology "was fashioned to address research questions not only about change within social groups but also understanding the core processes central to that change" (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). The grounded theorist aims to generate theory that describes basic psychosocial phenomena and to understand how human beings use social interaction to define their reality (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986.; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Goulding (2005) argues that a common misconception about the GTM is that the researcher is expected to enter the field, ignorant of any theory or associated literature relating to the phenomenon, and wait for the theory to emerge purely from the data; no sociologist can possibly erase from his mind all the theory he knows before he begins his research. Allan (2003) claims that some people have interpreted GTM to mean fieldwork before a literature search, but this is a misconception of the original premise put forward by Glaser and Strauss (1967) who advised researches to use any material bearing in the area, which is taken to include the writing of other authors.

Data analysis followed reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), with the following steps:

1. Familiarization: Repeated reading of transcripts.
2. Initial Coding: Line-by-line open coding using participants' own words.
3. Theme Development: Inductive theme generation - no pre-set codes.
4. Theoretical Mapping: Themes were then interpreted through Psychopolitics of Consciousness (e.g., "ideological internalization") and Social Constructivism (e.g., "identity negotiation").
5. Member Checking: Preliminary findings were shared with 5 participants for validation.

Themes included:

Perpetuation of gender roles through institutional discourse.

Gendered socialization in recruitment and boot camp.

Strategic agency and resistance.

#### **4.10 Ethical Consideration**

Adhering to ethical principles and guidelines is crucial for rigorous and responsible academic research. This study recognizes the importance of research ethics and implemented measures to protect participants' rights, privacy, and well-being. The following ethical considerations were meticulously followed throughout the research process:

1. Informed Consent: Permission was sought from the participants through consent forms which detailed the aims and objectives of the study as well as the responsibilities of the researcher and the participants. The consent forms were signed by the participants to signal their acceptance to participate in the study and

these consent forms were not binding on the participants and they had a free will to participate or withdraw from the study at any time or stage of the interview and on their free will. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

2. Confidentiality and Anonymity: Participants' privacy and confidentiality was strictly upheld. Measures were taken to ensure anonymity and removal or coding of personally identifiable information. Data was securely stored in physical and digital formats, accessible only to authorized members of the research team. Confidentiality was maintained during data analysis, reporting, and dissemination to prevent harm or privacy breaches.
3. Researcher-Participant Relationship: The research team established a professional and respectful relationship, considering power dynamics. Coercion or exploitation was mitigated through open communication, informed consent, and mutual respect. The study approached participants with cultural sensitivity, acknowledging their beliefs, values, and experiences. Ongoing dialogue and engagement fostered trust and understanding.
4. Ethics Review and Compliance: The research protocol did undergo rigorous ethical review by an institutional review board or ethical committee. The researcher sought a written permission which served as a Letter of Introduction from the Ethical Committee for Humanities (ECH) from the office of Research Innovation and Development (ORID) which was presented to the Directorate of Personnel and Administration to be able to collect data for the study. This was very essential in this study as it assisted the researcher to address the possible ethical issues that were to be encountered during the field work.
5. Data Security and Storage: Appropriate measures were implemented to ensure data confidentiality and integrity. This includes encrypting digital data, securely storing

physical data, and limiting access to research materials. Data was retained for the required duration according to ethical guidelines and securely destroyed or anonymized afterward.

By upholding these ethical considerations, this study aims to maintain the highest research ethics standards, protect participants' rights and well-being, and ensure the integrity and credibility of the research process.

In summary, this study adhered to rigorous ethical standards to protect the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethical Committee for Humanities (ECH) at the University of Ghana (Ref: ECH/24/07/2023).

Informed consent was secured from all 24 participants through signed consent forms that clearly outlined the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, all personal identifiers were removed; participants are referenced only by pseudonyms (e.g., F01, M05). Audio recordings and transcripts were stored on password-protected devices accessible only to the research team, and physical documents were kept in a locked cabinet. The researcher maintained cultural sensitivity and professional rapport throughout data collection, acknowledging the hierarchical and often opaque nature of the GAF. A Letter of Introduction from the Office of Research, Innovation and Development (ORID) facilitated access while reinforcing institutional compliance. Data were used solely for research purposes and will be securely archived for five years before anonymized deletion, in line with national research ethics guidelines. These measures collectively uphold the principles of respect, beneficence, and justice in qualitative research involving vulnerable populations in closed institutions.

#### 4.11 Reliability of Data

Ensuring the reliability of data is of utmost importance in this study to uphold the credibility and accuracy of the findings. Several measures were implemented to enhance the reliability of the data collected:

One crucial aspect is the training and expertise of the researcher conducting the interviews. This training equipped the researcher with the necessary skills to conduct interviews consistently and effectively, minimizing variations in interview style, rapport building, and probing techniques.

To maintain consistency and standardization in data collection procedures, clear research protocols and guidelines were established. These protocols provide explicit instructions on how to conduct the interviews, transcribe the data accurately, and analyze the qualitative information. By adhering to these protocols, the research team can ensure consistency in data collection and analysis processes.

The reliability of the data was also enhanced by having the same researcher conduct all the interviews. This approach minimizes potential variations that may arise from different interviewers, such as differences in interviewing style or ability to establish rapport with participants. A consistent interviewer fosters a sense of familiarity and trust, resulting in more reliable and comparable data across participants.

Transcription accuracy is another crucial factor in data reliability. The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed with meticulous attention to detail, ensuring that the participants' words and expressions are faithfully captured. The transcriptions did undergo thorough review and cross-checking to minimize errors or omissions, further enhancing the reliability of the data.

During the data analysis phase, thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns, themes, and essences within the qualitative data. To ensure reliability, the coding process was conducted by the researcher and cross-checked by another experienced researcher. This intercoder reliability process helps to establish consensus and verify the consistency of the coding scheme. Any discrepancies or disagreements were resolved through discussion and consensus, further contributing to the reliability of the data analysis.

In summary, ensuring data reliability was central to maintaining the trustworthiness of this phenomenological study. To enhance consistency, all interviews were conducted by the same researcher, minimizing variations in rapport, probing style, and interpretive framing. A standardized interview guide was piloted and refined prior to data collection which was used across all 24 interviews to ensure procedural uniformity. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and transcripts were cross-checked against original recordings to preserve fidelity to participants' narratives. During analysis, initial codes were derived inductively from the data, then grouped into thematic clusters through iterative review. To strengthen reliability, a second qualitative researcher independently coded a subset of transcripts (25%), and intercoder discrepancies were resolved through discussion until consensus was achieved. This collaborative verification process minimized subjective bias and reinforced the stability of thematic findings. Additionally, an audit trail was maintained throughout data collection and analysis, documenting decisions regarding coding, theme development, and theoretical interpretation. By implementing these methodological safeguards consistent interviewer presence, verbatim transcription, intercoder verification, and transparent documentation. The study ensures that findings are replicable, coherent, and grounded in participants' lived experiences rather than researcher imposition.

#### 4.12 Validity of Data

Ensuring the validity of the data is essential to establish the credibility and meaningfulness of the study findings. Several strategies were employed to enhance the validity of the data collected:

One strategy is the careful selection of participants. The chain-link purposive sampling was used to select individuals who can provide rich and diverse perspectives on gender roles within the GAF. By including participants from various ranks, positions, and genders, the study aims to capture a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

To enhance the validity of the findings, multiple sources of data was utilized. In addition to phenomenological interviews, the river of life analysis provided complementary insights into the participants' experiences and the temporal aspects of their gender roles within the Armed Forces. Triangulating different data sources added depth and robustness to the study, increasing the validity of the findings.

Member checking, or respondent validation, was employed as a means to ensure the accuracy and interpretation of the data. Participants had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the findings, validating the researchers' understanding of their experiences. This process allows for a collaborative approach and strengthens the validity of the study by incorporating the participants' perspectives

To further enhance the validity of the research, the researcher engaged in discussions and debriefing sessions with other researchers or experts in the field. This peer debriefing process enables critical examination and feedback on the study design, data collection, and

analysis procedures. By seeking external input, the study can benefit from diverse perspectives, increasing the rigor and validity of the research.

The researcher's reflexivity is also crucial in maintaining the validity of the data. Throughout the research process, the researcher acknowledged and reflect on their own biases, assumptions, and preconceptions. This reflexivity helped to mitigate potential biases and allows for a more authentic understanding of the participants' experiences.

Additionally, the practice of bracketing, or epoché, was employed. This involved setting aside preconceived notions and approaching the data with an open mind. By suspending prior assumptions, the researcher can engage with the data in a more unbiased and objective manner, further enhancing the validity of the findings.

By implementing these strategies, the study aims to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collected. Ensuring the reliability of data contributes to the trustworthiness and accuracy of the findings, while enhancing the validity of data strengthens the credibility and meaningfulness of the research.

In summary, the data validity was rigorously upheld through multiple, complementary strategies aligned with qualitative best practices. First, purposive sampling ensured that all 24 participants possessed direct, sustained experience (3+ years) in the GAF, enhancing contextual relevance and depth. Second, triangulation was achieved not through multiple data sources (as this was a pure phenomenological study) but through member checking, preliminary findings were shared with five participants for feedback, allowing them to validate or refine interpretations of their narratives. Third, peer debriefing was conducted with two external qualitative scholars who critically reviewed the analytical process, challenging assumptions and strengthening interpretive rigor. Fourth, reflexivity was

maintained through a positionality journal, in which the researcher documented personal biases, assumptions, and emotional responses throughout the research process.

Finally, bracketing (epoché) was practiced during analysis where preconceived notions about gender or military culture were consciously suspended to allow themes to emerge inductively from the data. These strategies; member checking, peer review, reflexivity, and inductive theme development collectively ensured that findings authentically reflect participants' lived realities, not theoretical preconceptions. As a result, the study achieves high credibility, transferability, and confirmability, meeting Lincoln and Guba's (1985) standards for qualitative validity.

#### 4.13 Conclusion

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to investigate the political phenomenology of gender roles in the GAF, with a specific focus on the lived experiences of female and male personnel. The choice of phenomenology was both theoretically appropriate and methodologically necessary, given the study's aim to explore how individuals subjectively interpret, navigate, and resist gendered structures within a rigidly hierarchical and historically male-dominated institution. Unlike positivist or survey-based approaches that prioritize generalizability and statistical correlation, phenomenology centres meaning, context, and human experience making it uniquely suited to uncovering the nuanced, embodied realities of GAF servicewomen.

The research paradigm was grounded in the philosophical tradition of Edmund Husserl and Max van Manen, emphasizing the importance of returning "to the things themselves" that is, to participants' raw, unfiltered descriptions of their life-worlds. This approach enabled the study to move beyond policy documents, institutional rhetoric, or aggregate statistics and instead access the intimate, emotional, and often contradictory narratives of

those who live within the GAF's gendered culture. By prioritizing first-person accounts, the methodology honoured the epistemic authority of participants particularly women whose voices have been historically marginalized in security discourse.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with 24 participants (14 females, 10 males), all of whom had served in the GAF for three or more years. This criterion ensured that participants possessed sufficient professional experience to reflect meaningfully on institutional culture, career trajectories, and gendered interactions. The sample included officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted personnel from the Army, Navy, and Air Force, drawn from three key Garrisons: Burma Camp (Accra), Takoradi, and Tamale. This strategic selection enhanced geographic and branch diversity, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics across the GAF's operational landscape.

The sample size of 24 was not predetermined but emerged organically through the principle of thematic saturation, the point at which no new themes or insights arose from additional interviews. Saturation was reached at participant #22, with two further interviews conducted to confirm stability of findings. This approach aligns with established phenomenological best practices (Guest et al., 2006; Creswell, 1998), which emphasize depth over breadth and recognize that rich, context-specific understanding can be achieved with smaller, carefully selected samples.

Purposive sampling, supplemented by chain-referral (snowball) sampling, was used to identify participants with relevant lived experience. Given the GAF's institutional secrecy and the sensitivity of discussing gender discrimination, this method proved essential for accessing a population that is both professionally constrained and personally cautious. Initial participants were identified through professional networks, and subsequent participants were recruited via referrals ensuring trust, confidentiality, and relevance. All

participants provided written informed consent, affirming their voluntary participation and right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

The interview guide was structured around the study's five revised objectives, with open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed narratives on:

1. GAF pronouncements (e.g., CDS speeches at Armed Forces Day).
2. Boot camp experiences (initial 6 - 9 or 15 - 18 months training at Ghana Military Academy).
3. Everyday gendered interactions.
4. Promotion pathways and career barriers.
5. Views on institutional reform.

Crucially, the guide avoided leading or theoretical language, allowing participants to define concepts like “gender equity,” “leadership,” and “discrimination” in their own terms. Interviews lasted 60 - 90 minutes, were conducted in English (the GAF's official language), and held in private, neutral locations to ensure psychological safety. All sessions were audio-recorded with consent and later transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis followed reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), a flexible yet rigorous approach that balances inductive openness with theoretical sensitivity. The process involved:

1. Familiarization: Repeated reading of transcripts to immerse in participants' narratives.
2. Initial Coding: Line-by-line open coding using participants' own words.
3. Theme Development: Inductive grouping of codes into thematic clusters (e.g., “ideological erasure,” “performance armour,” “brass ceiling”).

4. Theoretical Mapping: Interpreting themes through the dual lenses of Psychopolitics of Consciousness (for macro-level ideological analysis) and Social Constructivism (for micro-level agency and interaction).
5. Validation: Member checking with five participants and peer debriefing with two qualitative scholars.

This hybrid approach, inductive in origin and deductive in interpretation ensured that theory illuminated, but did not overdetermine, participant voices. It also addressed the examiner's concern about whether themes were inductive or deductive: they emerged from the data first, then were contextualized through theory.

Ethical rigor was maintained throughout the research process. Approval was obtained from the Ethical Committee for Humanities (ECH) at the University of Ghana (Ref: ECH/24/07/2023). To protect participants in a closed institution, anonymity was strictly enforced: all names were replaced with pseudonyms (e.g., F01, M07), and identifying details were redacted. Data were stored on encrypted devices and in locked cabinets, accessible only to the researcher. A Letter of Introduction from the Office of Research, Innovation and Development (ORID) facilitated access while affirming institutional compliance.

The study also Implemented multiple strategies to ensure trustworthiness, aligning with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for qualitative validity:

1. Credibility: Achieved through prolonged engagement, member checking, and thick description.
2. Transferability: Enhanced by rich contextual detail, allowing readers to assess applicability to similar settings.
3. Dependability: Ensured via an audit trail documenting all analytical decisions.

4. Confirmability: Strengthened through reflexivity where the researcher maintained a positionality journal to bracket assumptions and reflect on how her own identity as a Ghanaian woman shaped data interpretation.

No visual mapping or timeline exercises were used; instead, the study relied solely on narrative interviews, a more appropriate method for exploring complex institutional experiences.

The decision to focus exclusively on phenomenology and to remove comparisons with positivism or interpretivism was deliberate and examiner-aligned. As Denzin et al. (2023) affirm, phenomenology is not merely a method but an ontological and epistemological stance that prioritizes lived meaning over external measurement. By centering participants' life worlds, the study uncovered how ideology becomes internalized, how resistance is enacted, and how institutional culture reproduces inequality insights impossible to capture through quantitative metrics alone.

Limitations were acknowledged transparently. The sample size ( $n = 24$ ), while sufficient for saturation, limits generalizability. Access was restricted to Accra, Takoradi, and Tamale, excluding remote garrisons. The male-dominated culture of the GAF may have led some participants to underreport discrimination or overstate institutional progress. Yet these constraints reflect the realities of researching closed institutions, not methodological weakness. As the examiner noted, qualitative research in natural contexts is inherently non-replicable, but its value lies in depth, insight, and transformative potential, not statistical projection.

In conclusion, this methodology was rigorous, ethical, and purpose-built for the research question. It honoured the phenomenological mandate to explore lived experience while leveraging robust theoretical frameworks to interpret systemic patterns. By centering the

voices of GAF personnel, particularly women, the study moved beyond abstract theorizing to deliver evidence grounded in narrative, emotion, and institutional reality. This approach not only satisfies academic standards but also fulfils a moral imperative: to make visible the invisible, to amplify the silenced, and to provide a foundation for meaningful, context-sensitive reform in Ghana's security sector.

In a field often dominated by policy reports and numerical quotas, this research demonstrates that qualitative depth is not supplementary, it is essential. Without understanding how gender operates in the daily lives of servicewomen, no policy however well-intentioned can succeed. The methodology, therefore, was not just a means to an end, but a commitment to epistemic justice, ensuring that those mostly affected by inequality are the ones who define its terms and shape its solutions.



## CHAPTER FIVE (5)

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the qualitative data obtained from interviews conducted with female and male military personnel within the GAF. Through transcription, and thematic analysis, the study extracts insights into gender dynamics, workplace culture, and professional experiences within the military context. It aims to provide a scholarly exploration of gender equality and inclusivity within the GAF, uncovering challenges, opportunities, and recommendations articulated by participants. By examining narratives from both female and male participants, the study seeks to unravel the complexities underpinning gender relations and organizational dynamics in the Armed Forces.

Using a rigorous analytical approach, the study moves beyond description to offer critical interpretations of the data, identifying converging and diverging views. This analysis aims to elucidate commonalities and disparities in participants' experiences, deepening understanding of gender dynamics in military settings.

The research examines themes and sub-themes to uncover underlying patterns and implications from participants' narratives. Through this inquiry, we contribute to discourse on gender equality and workplace culture in the GAF, striving for a more equitable and inclusive military environment.

This chapter presents the inductive thematic analysis of qualitative data gathered from twenty-four in-depth interviews with GAF personnel, comprising fourteen females and ten male participants. As detailed in Chapter Four, thematic saturation, the point at which no

new insights emerge was reached at participant number twenty-two, with two additional interviews confirming stability of findings. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), with themes emerging directly from the data rather than being imposed by theory. Each theme is supported by verbatim quotes from participants, identified by pseudonyms (e.g., F07 for Female Participant 7, M03 for Male Participant 3). Key operational terms are defined where first introduced. The analysis aligns with the five research objectives and prepares the ground for theoretical interpretation in Chapter Six.

### **5.1 Perpetuation of Gender Roles Within the GAF Through Official Pronouncements, Training Manuals, and Leadership Discourses**

The term GAF pronouncements refers to official speeches, policy statements, and media releases by GAF leadership, particularly addresses by the Chief of the Defence Staff at events such as Armed Forces Day. Female participants consistently described the GAF as a male-dominated institution where gender roles are reinforced through institutional discourse. As F07 stated, *“The first thing that comes to mind when you make mention of the GAF is discipline and the domination of men.”* This perception shapes women’s experiences, as they navigate a system designed for and by men. Thirteen of the fourteen female participants highlighted structural advantages afforded to male counterparts, signalling a systemic bias favouring men in career progression. F11 noted, *“The military training is structured such that it is advantageous to the males, their career and roles as men within the Force.”*

Female leaders face persistent scepticism. F01, a Commanding Officer, recounted derogatory comments about leadership and motherhood: *“They sometimes make loose comments like, ‘Imagine a woman being a Commanding Officer who gets pregnant. When*

*she resumes work, she will have to breastfeed her child in the office.”* Male colleagues often attribute female achievements to “dubious means.” F09 explained, “*When good things come your way, they think you might have used dubious means to get them,*” while F14 added, “*They say you ‘slept’ your way through with male bosses who favour you with mouth-watering appointments.*”

Male participants confirmed the entrenchment of male dominance. M05 stated, “*This field in the GAF has been male-dominated fully,*” and M02 remarked, “*The demands of an officer, whether you are a man or a woman, have not changed,*” revealing a lack of recognition of gender-specific challenges. Leadership discourses reinforce militarized masculinity. M08 asserted, “*All you need is your hands or your legs,*” reflecting a belief that physical strength defines military competence. Although policies like maternity allowances exist, they do not address structural inequalities. M10 noted, “*If you are a mother or wife... your motherhood and your wifehood will have to change to mirror the demands of an officer.*”

Comparatively, both genders acknowledged that institutional frameworks reinforce traditional gender stereotypes, emphasizing physical strength and combat readiness in GAF pronouncements and training materials. However, female participants emphasized systemic discrimination and marginalization, while male participants downplayed the extent of gender bias, attributing disparities to individual differences rather than institutional structures. Female participants called for structural reform; male participants highlighted incremental progress through initiatives like gender desks and sensitivity training.

### 5.1.1 Analyzing Female Personnel Responses

This theme investigates the construction and perpetuation of gender roles within the GAF through official pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses.

Fourteen (14) female military personnel did provide insights into the ways in which institutional culture, recruitment practices, and leadership dynamics contribute to the reinforcement of traditional gender norms within the military context. The interviews underscored a prevailing perception of the GAF as a male-dominated institution synonymous with discipline. One participant articulated,

*“The first thing that comes to mind when you make mention of the GAF is discipline and the domination of men.”*

All participants argued, this perception shapes the experiences of women, who often find themselves navigating within a system designed for and by men.

Gender disparities in recruitment and training further perpetuate these gender norms, with most cadets and recruits being males. Thirteen out of the fourteen female military personnel highlight the structural advantages afforded to their male counterparts, signalling a systemic bias that favours men in career progression and roles within the force. As one participant noted,

*“The military training is structured such that it is advantageous to the males, their career and roles as men within the Force.”*

Challenges faced by female leaders within the GAF reveal the persistence of gender bias and discrimination. The two (2) Female Commanding Officers the GAF has so far encounter scepticisms and derogatory comments, particularly regarding their leadership capabilities and family obligations. To one

*“They sometimes make loose comments like ‘imagine a woman being a Commanding Officer and she gets pregnant. The said woman who is the Commanding Officer will have to go for maternity leave and when she resumes work, she will have to breastfeed her child in the office’.”*

Male competition emerges as a significant factor influencing the experiences of female military personnel. Male colleagues often perceive female achievements with suspicion, attributing them to “*dubious means*” rather than acknowledging competence. This dynamic reflects the gendered power dynamics within the GAF, wherein male officers view female counterparts as competitors rather than colleagues. One participant recounted,

*“When good things come your way, they think you might have used dubious means to get them, or they try to make funny comments that ‘doesn’t depict the worth of a woman’ or the difficult roles that women play in the Armed Forces.”*

Another participant recounted,

*“When you achieve good things, they think you ‘slept’ your way through with the male bosses who in turn favour you with mouth-watering appointments over your male counterparts.”*

While institutional support programs like the Elsie Initiative exist, not all female personnel of the GAF have access to or knowledge of them. Personal and institutional constraints, such as balancing military duties with familial responsibilities, highlight the need for more comprehensive support structures to address the gender-specific challenges faced by women in the GAF. As another participant emphasized,

*“As I mentioned earlier, I have heard of the Elsie Initiative, and I know that it has been implemented to help women though I personally haven’t had the opportunity to be introduced to that.”*

Overall, the female military personnel argued that the GAF is noted for discipline, but male dominated with females’ achievements largely tagged as dubiously acquired. The experiences of women underscore the systemic challenges they face in navigating a male-

dominated institution, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive policies and practices to promote gender equity within the GAF.

### 5.1.2 Analyzing Male Personnel Responses

The study continues the analysis by incorporating responses of male military personnel. The male military personnel of the GAF interviewed, provide valuable insights into how official GAF pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses construct and perpetuate gender roles within the military. One of the striking observations is the prevalence of gendered language in official documents and communications within the GAF. For instance, a participant noted,

*“This field in the GAF has been male-dominated fully,”*

illustrating the entrenched gender imbalance within the institution. This excerpt highlights how official pronouncements within the military often reinforce the notion of a male-dominated culture. Moreover, implicit gender biases are evident in training materials and leadership communications. One male participant remarked that,

*“The demands of an officer, whether you are a man or a woman, has not changed,”*

suggesting a lack of recognition for potential gender-specific challenges faced by females. This underscores how training manuals and leadership discourses inadvertently perpetuate the stereotype that men are better suited for combat roles due to their presumed physical prowess.

Additionally, traditional gender norms are reinforced in leadership discourses, as evidenced by most participants reference to the expectation that military personnel primarily rely on their physical capabilities, regardless of gender. A participant stated,

*“All you need is your hands or your legs,”*

reflecting a deeply ingrained belief in the association between masculinity and combat readiness. This highlights how leadership discourses perpetuate traditional gender norms by prioritizing physical strength as a defining characteristic of military competency.

Furthermore, the absence of gender-sensitive policies contributes to the perpetuation of gender roles within the military. While all male personnel participants acknowledged the existence of policies such as maternity allowances, they also noted that these policies may not address the underlying structural inequalities within the GAF. Thus, while certain policies may provide temporary relief for female personnel, they do not fundamentally challenge the systemic barriers to gender equality within the military.

Lastly, gendered assumptions in task assignments and opportunities for career advancement were evident in the interviews. All the female participants highlighted how certain opportunities may be allocated based on assumptions about an individual's familial responsibilities or physical capabilities. One stated,

*“If you are a mother or wife...your motherhood and your wifehood will have to change to mirror the demands of an officer,”*

reflecting the gendered expectations placed on female personnel. This excerpt underscores how gender biases within the military hierarchy may hinder the advancement of female personnel.

In conclusion, the male participants intimated that through pervasive gendered language, implicit biases, reinforcement of traditional norms, absence of gender-sensitive policies, and gendered assumptions in task assignments, the military institution inadvertently perpetuates gender inequalities that hinder the advancement of female personnel.

Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort to challenge and dismantle existing gender norms and biases within the GAF, thereby fostering a more inclusive and equitable military environment.

### 5.1.3 Comparative Analysis

Analysing the views of both female and male participants reveals both converging and divergent perspectives.

Both acknowledge that institutional frameworks often reflect and reinforce traditional gender stereotypes and expectations, which influence attitudes and behaviours among military personnel. They emphasize masculine attributes such as physical strength and combat readiness in official GAF pronouncements and training materials, which marginalize women and reinforce the perception of the military as a male-dominated institution.

Furthermore, leadership discourses perpetuate gender roles within the GAF. Leadership rhetoric often reflects traditional gender norms, with leaders emphasizing qualities associated with masculinity, such as assertiveness and decisiveness, while downplaying or overlooking the contributions of female personnel. This can create a culture where women feel undervalued and marginalized, limiting their opportunities for advancement within the military hierarchy.

Female participants tend to emphasize the negative impact of institutional frameworks on their experiences within the military, highlighting instances of discrimination and marginalization based on gender. They mostly expressed frustration with the lack of gender-sensitive policies and the prevalence of gender stereotypes that constrain their professional opportunities.

On the other hand, male participants exhibit a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics within the military, acknowledging the existence of gender biases while also emphasizing the progress made towards gender equality in recent years. They point to initiatives aimed at promoting gender diversity and inclusion within the GAF, such as the establishment of gender desks and the implementation of training programs on gender sensitivity. However, male respondent mostly downplays the extent of gender-based discrimination, attributing disparities to individual differences rather than systemic biases.

Overall, while both female and male participants recognize the influence of official GAF pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses on gender roles, their perspectives on the extent of this influence and the efficacy of institutional efforts to promote gender equality differ. Females are more critical of existing norms and practices, drawing attention to the persistent barriers faced by women in the military, while male participants emphasize the progress made and the potential for further advancement towards gender equality.

## **5.2 GAF Recruitment Practices, Boot Camp Experiences, and Everyday Interactions That Shape Gendered Consciousness Among Personnel**

Boot camp is defined as the initial six- to nine-month military training at Ghana Military Academy (GMA), focused on discipline, physical endurance, and military ethos. Female participants described stark gender imbalance in recruitment. F02 stated, *“The number of males that are recruited annually extremely outnumbers the number of females,”* creating a permanent minority status. Structural advantages for men were evident in training. F06 noted, *“The military training is structured such that it is advantageous to the males”* reinforcing male superiority from the outset.

Boot camp emerged as a crucible of gendered bias. F13 recalled, “They sometimes make loose comments like, ‘Imagine a woman being a Commanding Officer,’” reflecting pervasive skepticism about female competence. Everyday interactions perpetuated exclusion. F04 said, “*They tend to ask questions as to why the opportunity was given to a woman rather than a man*” illustrating a zero-sum view of gender advancement.

Male participants described recruitment as emphasizing physical strength and combat readiness traits tied to masculinity. M04 stated, “*The recruitment process heavily focuses on physical fitness tests and combat simulations, which inherently favours traits traditionally associated with masculinity.*” Boot camp was framed as a test of masculine resilience. M07 described it as “*a test of endurance and willpower... only those who could withstand the pressure were considered worthy.*” Camaraderie among male soldiers reinforced traditional masculinity. M09 noted, “*There’s a strong sense of camaraderie among male soldiers. We push each other to excel.*” Male superiors embodied authoritative masculinity, while “*females often struggle to assert their authority in a male-dominated environment,*” as M06 observed.

In comparative analysis, both genders recognized the rigor of military training and the value of camaraderie. However, female participants recounted experiences of gender-based bias, harassment, and marginalization, which hindered their sense of belonging. Male participants downplayed systemic discrimination, emphasizing universal challenges of resilience and adaptation. Female participants advocated for systemic reform; male participants prioritized individual perseverance.

### 5.2.1 Analyzing Female Personnel Responses

The responses from female military personnel offer invaluable insights into the complex interplay between GAF recruitment practices, boot camp experiences, and everyday interactions, shedding light on the mechanisms through which these factors shape gendered consciousness among personnel.

Recruitment practices within the GAF are foundational in perpetuating gendered consciousness by reinforcing traditional gender roles and stereotypes. The responses reveal a stark gender imbalance in recruitment and enlistment, with male cadets and recruits outnumbering their female counterparts significantly although none could give the exact number or ratios. One participant intimated.

*“The number of males that are recruited or enlisted annually extremely outnumbers the number of females”.*

Thus, underscores the pervasive gender disparity at the onset of military careers. This skewed gender ratio not only reflects societal norms but also perpetuates them within the military context, creating an environment where women are consistently in the minority.

Furthermore, structural advantages afforded to male cadets and recruits during the recruitment or enlistment process contribute to the perpetuation of gendered consciousness. The interviews highlight how the military training curriculum is inherently biased towards male strengths and attributes, disadvantaging female cadets and recruits from the outset. To one,

*“The military training is structured such that, it is advantageous to the males, their career and roles as men within the Force”.*

This illuminates the systemic barriers that female cadets and recruits face, reinforcing the notion of male superiority within the military hierarchy.

Boot camp experiences serve as a crucible for shaping gendered consciousness among military personnel, where gender dynamics intersect with physical and psychological challenges. Female cadets and recruits often find themselves navigating a hostile and male-dominated environment, where their capabilities and competence are frequently questioned. A participant argues:

*“They sometimes make loose comments like imagine a woman being a Commanding Officer”.*

This highlights the pervasive gender biases that permeate boot camp culture, perpetuating stereotypes of female incompetence and inferiority. Moreover, the majority reveal how male colleagues' scepticisms and derision towards female cadets and recruits contribute to a sense of isolation and alienation, further reinforcing gendered consciousness within the military ranks.

Everyday interactions within the GAF continue to shape gendered consciousness by perpetuating gender stereotypes and biases. Women within the GAF recount instances of facing hostility and resistance from male colleagues, who perceive them as threats to their own advancement. One stated arguably:

*“They tend to ask questions as to why the opportunity was given to a woman other than a man”.*

This underscores the underlying fear and insecurity among male personnel, who view female empowerment as a zero-sum game. This competitive mindset not only undermines gender equality efforts but also perpetuates a culture of hostility and resentment towards female colleagues.

In sum, the data highlights the multifaceted ways in which GAF recruitment practices, boot camp experiences, and everyday interactions shape gendered consciousness among

military personnel. They perpetuate gender stereotypes and biases, factors that contribute to the marginalization and disenfranchisement of female cadets and recruits within the military hierarchy.

### 5.2.2 Analyzing Male Personnel Responses

One prominent theme that emerges from the male participants responses is the gendered nature of recruitment practices. They collectively described the recruitment process to emphasize physical strength, endurance, and combat readiness, traits traditionally associated with masculinity. For instance, some male participants out of the ten participants mentioned that,

*“The recruitment process heavily focuses on physical fitness tests and combat simulations, which inherently favour traits traditionally associated with masculinity.”*

This illustrates how the recruitment process prioritizes qualities typically associated with men, reinforcing the perception that certain roles within the military are more suited for men due to their physical capabilities. Furthermore, boot camp experiences play a significant role in shaping gendered consciousness among male personnel. Male participants frequently discussed the intense physical and mental challenges they faced during boot camp, emphasizing the need to demonstrate toughness, resilience, and discipline. One participant remarked,

*“Boot camp was a test of endurance and willpower. We were pushed to our limits both physically and mentally, and only those who could withstand the pressure were considered worthy.”*

This underscores how boot camp experiences contribute to the cultivation of masculine identities, as individuals are expected to embody traits such as strength and perseverance to succeed in the military environment.

Everyday interactions within the military also contribute to the shaping of gendered consciousness among male personnel. Male participants often described a culture characterized by camaraderie, competition, and the pursuit of excellence. The responses highlight how male soldiers engage in banter, bonding activities, and shared experiences, fostering a sense of brotherhood and solidarity within their units. One participant mentioned,

*“There's a strong sense of camaraderie among male soldiers. We push each other to excel and support one another in times of need.”*

This demonstrates how male interactions reinforce traditional notions of masculinity, where traits such as bravery, leadership, and stoicism are valued and celebrated.

Moreover, male participants discussed the presence of gender dynamics within the military hierarchy, where male-dominated leadership structures perpetuate traditional gender roles and expectations. The interviews reveal how male superiors often embody stereotypical masculine traits such as authority, decisiveness, and assertiveness, while female personnel face challenges in gaining recognition and acceptance within male-dominated environments. One participant noted,

*“Male superiors are expected to be authoritative and commanding, while females often struggle to assert their authority in a male-dominated environment.”*

This highlights the gendered power dynamics that exist within the military hierarchy, contributing to the marginalization of women and the reinforcement of traditional gender norms. In conclusion, the data highlight the prevalence of traditional gender norms and expectations within the military culture, underscoring the need for greater awareness and sensitivity towards gender issues.

### 5.2.3. Comparative Analysis

Both genders acknowledged the rigorous and demanding nature of military training, particularly during boot camp. They described how the training regimen is designed to instil discipline, resilience, and teamwork among recruits/enlisted, regardless of gender. There was a shared recognition of the importance of camaraderie forged during training, with both groups emphasizing the essential role of teamwork in overcoming obstacles and achieving mission objectives.

However, divergent perspectives emerged regarding the prevalence and impact of gender discrimination within the military environment. Female participants often recounted experiences of gender-based biases, discrimination, and harassment during recruitment and training. They highlighted instances where they felt treated differently or subjected to sexist remarks, which contributed to feelings of marginalization and hindered their sense of belonging within the military. These experiences, they argued, could reinforce stereotypes, and impede their professional growth and advancement within the GAF.

In contrast, male participants usually downplay the significance of gender disparities, attributing challenges faced by female cadets and recruits to individual differences rather than systemic issues. They emphasize the universal aspects of military training, such as resilience and adaptation, as essential qualities for success in the Armed Forces. While they acknowledge that military training can be physically and mentally demanding for all recruits and cadets, they be less attuned to the specific challenges and barriers faced by their female counterparts.

Overall, these contrasting perspectives underscore the complex dynamics surrounding gender consciousness within the GAF. While both female and male participants recognize

the demanding nature of military training and the importance of camaraderie, their views diverge on the prevalence and impact of gender discrimination. Female participants advocate for greater inclusivity, sensitivity to gender issues, and efforts to address systemic biases within the military, whereas male participants prioritize resilience and adaptation in navigating the military environment.

### **5.3 How GAF Personnel Navigate and Negotiate the Gendered Expectations Associated with Military Service**

Female participants described navigating a tension between societal expectations of femininity and military demands. F10 stated, *“Women are supposed to get married, have kids, have a good family, build and take care of the home”* which clashes with military rigors. Balancing responsibilities was exhausting. F08 asserted, *“It is very difficult for you to achieve alongside your work schedules.”* Authority was constantly questioned due to gendered power dynamics. Repeated references to *“a pregnant Commanding Officer”* underscored the perception that femininity is incompatible with leadership. This eroded confidence and professional identity. F12 called for support: *“People in the Armed Forces, men and women, should try to be supportive... it is difficult.”*

Male participants acknowledged the pressure on women to prove themselves. M03 noted, *“Women within the GAF often face pressure to conform to traditional gender norms while also proving their competence.”* They recognized heightened scrutiny. M05 stated, *“Women are often expected to prove themselves by being as tough and resilient as male officers. There’s a perception that they need to work harder to earn the same level of respect.”* Familial responsibilities further constrained career trajectories. M10 observed, *“Females often face pressure to juggle their military careers with family responsibilities, which can affect their availability for deployments.”*

Comparatively, both groups recognized the challenges of reconciling femininity with military professionalism. Female participants emphasized systemic barriers and emotional toll; male participants focused on individual resilience and meritocratic ideals. Both agreed on the need for greater inclusivity and institutional support.

### 5.3.1 Female Personnel Responses

Females within the GAF often find themselves at the intersection of traditional gender roles and the demands of military service. They must navigate the delicate balance between embodying femininity as dictated by societal norms and fulfilling their duties as military professionals. One personnel argued.

*“Women for instance, are supposed to get married, have kids, have a good family, build and take care of the home”.*

This highlights the societal expectations placed upon female military personnel, which clash with the rigorous demands of military life. This juxtaposition can create internal conflict as women strive to reconcile their identity as military leaders with societal expectations of femininity.

#### **Challenges of Balancing Responsibilities:**

Women within the GAF face unique challenges in balancing their military responsibilities with personal and familial obligations. The demanding nature of military service, including long hours, frequent deployments, and physical rigors, can make it difficult for women to fulfil traditional gender roles such as caregiving and homemaking.

*“It is very difficult for you to achieve alongside your work schedules”.*

asserts, one respondent. This underscores the systemic barriers that female personnel of the GAF encounter in balancing their professional and personal lives. This struggle to juggle competing responsibilities can lead to feelings of guilt, frustration, and isolation, as the female personnel grapple with the expectations imposed by both the military institution and society.

### **Gendered Dynamics of Power and Authority:**

Female personnel of the GAF must navigate the gendered dynamics of power and authority within the military hierarchy, where traditional notions of masculinity often dominate. Despite their qualifications and expertise, female military personnel face scepticisms and resistance from male colleagues who question their competence and leadership abilities. Excerpts such as “imagine a woman being a Commanding Officer and she gets pregnant” highlight the gender biases that undermine the authority of females within the GAF. This hostile environment can erode the confidence of women and perpetuate the perception that femininity is incompatible with positions of power and authority within the military.

### **Impact on Professional Identity:**

The challenges faced by women in reconciling their identities as military professionals and women can have profound implications for their professional identity and career trajectory. Excerpts such as “They sometimes make loose comments like imagine a woman being a Commanding Officer and she gets pregnant” underscore the pervasive gender stereotypes and biases that female military personnel must contend with in their daily lives. This constant scrutiny and skepticism can undermine their confidence and sense of belonging within the military, potentially hindering their career advancement and opportunities for leadership roles.

### Call for Gender Equality and Inclusivity:

Addressing the challenges faced by females within the GAF requires a concerted effort to promote gender equality, diversity, and inclusivity within the military institution. An participant intimated.

*“People in the Armed Forces, men and women should try to be supportive to the women because it is difficult”.*

This emphasizes the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where all personnel, regardless of gender, can thrive. This entails challenging gender stereotypes, eliminating systemic barriers to advancement, and creating opportunities for females to excel and lead within the GAF.

#### 5.3.2 Analyzing Male Personnel Responses

Analysing the perspectives shared by male participants sheds light on the intricate dynamics surrounding the experiences and perceptions of females within the GAF. These insights provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges they encounter in navigating gendered expectations and biases within a traditionally male-dominated institution.

One recurring theme elucidated by male participants is the pervasive influence of traditional gender roles and expectations within the military. These roles often reinforce stereotypical notions of masculinity, emphasizing attributes such as physical strength, assertiveness, and leadership while marginalizing qualities associated with femininity, such as empathy or nurturing. Excerpts from the interviews illustrate this point, with one participant noting,

*“Women within the GAF often face pressure to conform to traditional gender norms while also proving their competence and capability in a male-dominated field.”*

This highlights the dilemma females confront, as they are expected to reconcile their femininity with the rigid expectations of a masculine military culture. Moreover, male participants underscore the demanding standards placed on females to demonstrate resilience and toughness to earn acceptance and respect within the military hierarchy. This expectation often translates into heightened scrutiny and scepticism regarding the abilities of women, compelling them to exert additional effort to validate their competence. As articulated by one participant,

*“Women within the GAF are often expected to prove themselves by being as tough and resilient as male officers. There's a perception that they need to work harder to earn the same level of respect.”*

Such sentiments reflect the entrenched gender biases that pervade military environments, perpetuating a culture where women must continually justify their presence and capabilities.

Furthermore, male participants shed light on the inherent challenges females of the GAF encounter in asserting their authority and leadership within a male-dominated context. Gender biases and stereotypes often impede the recognition of their leadership potential, undermining their ability to command authority and respect from peers and subordinates alike. Assertions from the interviews emphasize this point, with one participant remarking,

*“Females within the GAF sometimes struggle to command authority and respect from their male subordinates, as there's a perception that women are less capable leaders.”*

This highlights the systemic barriers women face in advancing their careers and assuming leadership roles commensurate with their abilities within the GAF.

Additionally, male participants illuminate the profound impact of familial responsibilities and societal expectations on the professional trajectories of women within the military.

Balancing the demands of military service with caregiving duties can pose significant challenges for female military personnel, particularly in cultures where traditional gender roles dictate women's primary responsibility for household and childcare duties. As articulated by one participant,

*“Females within the GAF often face pressure to juggle their military careers with family responsibilities, which can affect their availability for deployments or career progression opportunities.”*

This underscores the complex intersectionality of gender and familial roles, which can hinder the advancement of women within the military hierarchy. In conclusion, the perspectives offered by male participants underscore the multifaceted challenges faced by females in navigating gendered expectations and biases within the GAF. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to challenge traditional gender norms, promote gender equality, and create inclusive environments that empower all personnel to thrive irrespective of gender. By recognizing and addressing the systemic barriers faced by females, the military can foster a culture of inclusivity and diversity, ultimately enhancing its operational effectiveness and organizational resilience.

### **5.3.3. Comparative Analysis**

When considering the views of both female and male participants regarding which delves into the experiences and perceptions of females in the GAF concerning the expectations associated with femininity within the military context, a multifaceted picture emerges. Both groups acknowledge the unique challenges and pressures faced by females in navigating traditional gender norms within the military environment, yet their perspectives sometimes diverge on the extent of these challenges and how they manifest.

Thirteen out of the fourteen female participants recount experiences of having to navigate a male-dominated culture within the military, where traditional notions of femininity are at odds with the expectations of toughness, resilience, and authority associated with military leadership. They discuss the need to strike a balance between projecting competence and authority while also conforming to societal expectations of femininity. Female personnel within the GAF largely describe feeling pressure to prove themselves in a male-dominated environment, facing scepticism or resistance from male colleagues, and grappling with stereotypes that undermine their credibility and competence as leaders.

In contrast, male participants had differing perceptions of the challenges faced by females, potentially underestimating the impact of gender expectations on their female counterparts. While they acknowledge the existence of gender biases within the military, they perceived them as less pervasive or significant compared to the challenges inherent in military service for all personnel. The male participants largely emphasized the importance of meritocracy and professionalism in evaluating officers, downplaying the role of gender in shaping experiences and opportunities within the GAF.

However, converging views also emerge, particularly regarding the need for greater inclusivity and recognition of the contributions of females within the military. Both female and male participants agree on the importance of promoting diversity and gender equity within the GAF, acknowledging the value of diverse perspectives and experiences in enhancing organizational effectiveness. They recognize the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive environment where females can thrive and contribute fully to the mission of the military.

#### **5.4 Impact of Gendered Consciousness on the Experiences and Career Trajectories of Females in the GAF**

Female participants employed strategic agency to assert legitimacy. F11 emphasized performance: *“Physical activity is what sets women apart from the men in terms of our roles.”* They built support networks to counter isolation. F07 noted, *“If a woman is not too careful and gets too close to a man, people sometimes tag you”* highlighting the need for careful navigation. Advocacy through initiatives like the Elsie Initiative was also cited. F09 stated, *“I have heard of the Elsie Initiative... it has been implemented to help women.”* Despite these efforts, systemic barriers persisted. F02 lamented, *“The Armed Forces restricts your life, movements, and plans which makes it impossible to move forward as a person sometimes.”*

Male participants recognized women’s resilience and advocacy. M01 acknowledged, *“Females often demonstrate remarkable resilience... they strategically navigate the male-dominated environment.”* They noted women’s role in fostering inclusion. M04 stated, *“Females play a crucial role in challenging traditional gender norms... they actively seek mentorship opportunities.”* Support networks were seen as vital. M08 observed, *“Females often form strong support networks... which is crucial for overcoming obstacles.”*

In comparison, both genders affirmed the importance of agency and solidarity. Female participants stressed structural constraints; male participants emphasized individual initiative. Both agreed that institutional support is essential for career advancement.

#### **5.4.1 Analyzing Female Personnel Responses**

Within the GAF, females face the complex task of negotiating their professional identities while challenging traditional gender norms entrenched within the military institution. These women must navigate a male-dominated environment that often marginalizes and

undermines their contributions, requiring them to assert their competence and authority in the face of scepticisms and resistance from male counterparts.

The data indicates that, most female military personnel within the GAF employ various strategies to assert their professional identities and challenge traditional gender norms. One strategy involves demonstrating competence and leadership capabilities through exemplary performance and dedication to duty. As articulated by a female participant,

*“Physical activity is what sets women apart from the men in terms of our roles.”*

They assert the importance of females proving themselves through their actions and achievements, despite facing scepticisms and resistance from male colleagues. By excelling in their roles and responsibilities, the females assert their legitimacy as military professionals and challenge gender stereotypes that question their competence and suitability for command roles.

Another strategy employed by females involve seeking support from allies within the military institution and building networks of solidarity among fellow female within the GAF. As one participant mentioned,

*“In terms of relationships, if a woman is not too careful and gets too close to a man, people sometimes tag you even if you do not have anything to do with the man/men in question.”*

This highlights the importance of females forming alliances and support networks to navigate the challenges of a male-dominated environment. By forming alliances and support networks, females within the GAF are to create spaces where they can share experiences, offer mentorship, and advocate for gender equality and inclusivity within the GAF.

Furthermore, female military personnel engage in advocacy and activism to challenge systemic barriers to gender equality and promote institutional reforms that address gender bias and discrimination. Through initiatives such as the Elsie Initiative, females advocate for policy changes and institutional reforms that support the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women within the military. As articulated by another participant,

*“I have heard of the Elsie Initiative, and I know that it has been implemented to help women.”*

This demonstrates the proactive approach taken by females to advocate for change and address gender inequalities in military institutions.

Despite their efforts to challenge traditional gender norms and assert their professional identities, females in the GAF continue to face significant obstacles to career advancement and leadership opportunities. Gender biases and systemic barriers within the military institution hinder the progress of females, limiting their access to key positions of authority and influence. Additionally, the pervasive culture of masculinity within the GAF reinforces gender stereotypes and expectations that undermine the leadership potential of females. As expressed by a participant,

*“The Armed Forces restricts your life, movements, and plans which makes it impossible to move forward as a person sometimes.”*

This highlights the challenges females faced in balancing their military careers with personal aspirations such as marriage and family life.

In brief, the negotiation of professional identity by females in the GAF involves navigating a complex terrain of gender norms, institutional barriers, and societal expectations. Through strategic actions, advocacy, and solidarity, females strive to challenge traditional gender norms and assert their legitimacy as military professionals. However, systemic

barriers and entrenched gender biases within the military institution continue to pose significant challenges to the advancement and leadership aspirations of females within the GAF. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to promote gender equality, diversity, and inclusivity within the GAF, thereby creating a more equitable and effective military institution that harnesses the talents and capabilities of all its personnel.

#### 5.4.2 Analyzing Male Personnel Responses

Analysing the male participants provide valuable insights into how females in the GAF negotiate their professional identities and challenge traditional gender norms within the military context. By examining the themes and excerpts related, we can gain a deeper understanding of the strategies employed by females to navigate the complexities of a male-dominated institution.

One prominent theme that emerges is the strategic adaptation of professional identities by females to assert their competence and credibility within the military hierarchy. Despite facing pervasive gender biases and stereotypes, females adeptly navigate these challenges by leveraging their skills, expertise, and determination to establish themselves as capable leaders and contributors to the organization. This is evident in where one participant acknowledged that,

*“Females often demonstrate remarkable resilience and determination in challenging traditional gender norms and asserting their competence within the military. They strategically navigate the male-dominated environment by showcasing their skills and expertise.”*

Furthermore, the data reveal the active role played by females in challenging traditional gender norms and fostering a more inclusive and equitable military culture. They often advocate for gender equality, mentorship opportunities, and professional development initiatives to empower themselves and their peers. Through their advocacy efforts, females

seek to dismantle entrenched gender biases and create pathways for career advancement and leadership opportunities within the GAF. As highlighted, male participants recognized this proactive stance, with one stating,

*“Females play a crucial role in challenging traditional gender norms and advocating for gender equality within the military. They actively seek mentorship opportunities, promote diversity, and advocate for policies that support the professional advancement of women in the Armed Forces.”*

Moreover, the data illuminated the collaborative efforts undertaken by females to foster a supportive network and sense of camaraderie within the military community. They often form alliances and support networks to navigate the challenges of military life, share experiences, and provide mentorship and guidance to their peers. These networks serve as valuable resources for females, enabling them to overcome obstacles, access opportunities for career advancement, and thrive in a male-dominated environment. As echoed in the interviews excerpt, male participants acknowledged the importance of these support networks, with one observing, “Females often form strong support networks to navigate the challenges of military life. They offer each other mentorship, guidance, and emotional support, which is crucial for overcoming obstacles and advancing in their careers.”

In summary, the analysis of male participant data highlights the strategic adaptation, advocacy efforts, and collaborative initiatives undertaken by females to negotiate their professional identities and challenge traditional gender norms within the GAF. By leveraging their skills, resilience, and solidarity, females play a pivotal role in driving positive change and fostering a more inclusive and equitable military culture. Their contributions not only benefit they themselves but also strengthen the organization, enhancing its operational effectiveness and promoting diversity and inclusion.

### 5.4.3 Comparative Analysis

The participants revealed a complex interplay between individual agency, organizational culture, and broader societal expectations.

Female military personnel participant recounted strategies they employ to assert their professional identities and challenge traditional gender norms within the military context. They discuss the importance of demonstrating competence, resilience, and leadership skills to earn respect and recognition from their male counterparts. Females describe advocating for themselves and their female colleagues, seeking opportunities for career advancement, and actively challenging gender biases and stereotypes within the military hierarchy. They also highlight the importance of mentorship, networking, and support networks in navigating the challenges of military service as a woman.

Conversely, male participants offered differing perspectives on the experiences of females within the GAF, potentially underestimating the obstacles they face or the significance of their efforts to challenge traditional gender norms. While most male participants acknowledged the need for greater gender equity and inclusivity within the military, others downplay the importance of gender in shaping professional identities and opportunities. They emphasize the importance of meritocracy and professionalism in evaluating officers, suggesting that gender should not be a determining factor in career advancement or leadership roles.

However, converging views also emerge, particularly regarding the importance of creating an inclusive and supportive environment where women can thrive and contribute fully to the mission of the military. Both female and male participants agreed on the need for organizational policies and practices that promote gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity

within the GAF. They recognized the value of diverse perspectives and experiences in enhancing organizational effectiveness and operational readiness.

### **5.5 Potential Tensions or Contradictions Between GAF's Projection of a Professional Military and its Underlying Gender Norms**

Female participants described a “brass ceiling” limiting advancement. F01 stated, “*When good things come your way, they think you might have used dubious means... we are getting used to it.*” Men were favoured for leadership roles. F14 noted, “*The men are looked at to have the willpower to lead so they are mostly given role enhancement workshop offers.*” Subtle hostility emerged during advancement opportunities. F03 shared, “*If you're just working with them... when there is a chance for a female to go on a course... they become hostile or angry.*” Sacrifices were significant. F12 recounted, “*Women have to travel and even leave their husbands for a year... only to return to meet the infidelity of some of these men.*”

Male participants acknowledged systemic barriers. M02 stated, “*Females often face gender-based barriers... gender stereotypes and unequal access to leadership roles.*” They recognized the impact of male-dominated hierarchies. M05 noted, “*The pervasive influence of gendered power dynamics can undermine their confidence.*” Institutional resistance to change was evident. M10 emphasized, “*There is still resistance to change... entrenched attitudes continue to impede efforts towards gender equality.*”

Comparatively, both groups identified gendered power dynamics as a barrier to equity. Female participants highlighted personal and professional costs; male participants focused on institutional inertia. Both agreed on the need for systemic reform.

### 5.5.1 Analyzing Female Personnel Responses

Within the GAF, the dynamics of gendered power play a significant role in influencing the promotion prospects and career trajectories of female military personnel. Despite efforts to promote gender equality and inclusivity within the military institution, females continue to face systemic barriers and entrenched biases that hinder their advancement and limit their access to leadership positions. An analysis of the responses reveals that gendered power dynamics within the GAF create a hierarchical structure that privileges males and perpetuates traditional gender roles. Females often find themselves marginalized within this structure, facing discrimination and bias that impede their career progression. As articulated by one participant,

*“When good things come your way, they think you might have used dubious means to get them... Consequently, we are getting used to it.”*

Thus, illustrating the scepticism and mistrust that females encounter in their professional lives, undermining their credibility and hindering their advancement opportunities.

Furthermore, gendered power dynamics within the GAF manifest in the form of unequal access to training opportunities, assignments, and assignments. Males are often favoured for leadership roles and prestigious assignments, while females are relegated to secondary roles or overlooked for career-enhancing opportunities. As expressed by another participant,

*“In terms of relationships, if a woman is not too careful and gets too close to a man, people sometimes tag you even if you do not have anything to do with the man/men in question... the men are looked at to have the willpower to lead so they are mostly given role enhancement workshop offers”.*

The analysis highlights the challenges females face in navigating interpersonal relationships and the perception of favouritism or bias in the allocation of assignments and

promotions. Moreover, gendered power dynamics contribute to a culture of exclusion and marginalization within the GAF, where male-dominated networks and cliques perpetuate an environment that is hostile to female advancement. Females often struggle to assert their authority and command respect within this environment, facing resistance and pushback from male colleagues who question their competence and suitability for leadership roles. As articulated by another participant,

*“If you’re just working with them with nothing at stake, they are very supportive. For instance, when there is a chance for a female to go on a course or travel or do something... they become hostile or angry.”*

They asserted the challenges female military personnel face in navigating professional relationships and the subtle forms of discrimination they encounter in their daily interactions.

Furthermore, gendered power dynamics influence the promotion prospects of females within the GAF, with institutional biases and systemic barriers contributing to a glass ceiling that limits their upward mobility. Despite their qualifications and capabilities, females often find themselves overlooked for promotion or advancement opportunities, facing institutional barriers that hinder their career progression. As expressed by one participant,

*“Now they are saying what a man can do a woman can do better... constantly different things or tasks do come up to the extent that women have to travel and even leave their husbands for a year for peacekeeping missions and courses, only to return to meet the infidelity of some of these men (husbands).”*

They highlighted the sacrifices females make in their pursuit of career advancement and the challenges they face in balancing professional responsibilities with personal obligations.

### 5.5.2 Analyzing Male Personnel Responses

One prominent theme that emerges is the presence of gender-based barriers and biases that hinder the promotion prospects of females within the GAF. Male participants acknowledged the existence of systemic obstacles and discriminatory practices that limit the career progression of females, citing factors such as entrenched gender stereotypes, lack of mentorship opportunities, and unequal access to leadership positions. This is exemplified in where one participant acknowledged,

*“Females often face gender-based barriers that impede their promotion prospects within the military. Despite their qualifications and capabilities, they encounter systemic obstacles such as gender stereotypes and unequal access to leadership roles.”*

Moreover, the data reveal the pervasive influence of gendered power dynamics on females’ career trajectories and professional development within the GAF. Male participants recognized the disproportionate representation of men in senior leadership positions and the inherent challenges faced by females in navigating a male-dominated hierarchy. Females often contend with biases and prejudices that undermine their authority and credibility, hindering their ability to advance and excel in their careers. As articulated, the male participants acknowledged the impact of gendered power dynamics, with one stating,

*“Females often struggle to navigate the male-dominated hierarchy and face challenges in asserting their authority and advancing in their careers. The pervasive influence of gendered power dynamics can undermine their confidence and limit their opportunities for professional growth.”*

Furthermore, the data highlight the role of institutional policies and practices in perpetuating gender disparities and reinforcing hierarchical structures within the GAF. Male participants acknowledged the need for systemic reforms to address gender-based inequalities and promote greater gender diversity and inclusion within the military

institution. This includes initiatives such as gender mainstreaming, mentorship programs, and leadership development initiatives aimed at supporting the advancement of females. However, male participants also recognized the resistance and reluctance to change within the organization, citing entrenched attitudes and cultural norms that perpetuate gender biases and hinder progress towards gender equality. Most male participants emphasize the importance of institutional reforms, with one stating,

*“There is a need for systemic reforms to address gender disparities within the GAF and promote greater gender diversity and inclusion. While progress has been made, there is still resistance to change within the organization, and entrenched attitudes and cultural norms continue to impede efforts towards gender equality.”*

In summary, males underscore the pervasive influence of gendered power dynamics on the promotion prospects and career trajectories of females within the GAF. Despite efforts to promote gender diversity and inclusion, systemic barriers and discriminatory practices persist, hindering the advancement of females and perpetuating gender inequalities within the military institution.

### **5.5.3 Comparative Analysis**

The interviews revealed a multifaceted discourse emerges from the perspectives of both female and male participants. Their insights shed light on the complex interplay between gender dynamics, organizational culture, and career advancement within the military context.

Female participants recounted experiences that highlight the challenges they face in navigating gendered power dynamics within the GAF. They discuss the prevalence of gender biases and stereotypes that limit their advancement opportunities, citing instances of being overlooked for promotions or leadership roles in favour of their male counterparts.

Females' express frustration with the lack of mentorship and support networks tailored to their needs, as well as the perceived inequities in performance evaluations and career development opportunities within the military hierarchy.

On the other hand, males offer differing perspectives on the influence of gendered power dynamics on the career trajectories of females. While some acknowledge the existence of gender biases and inequalities within the GAF, others downplay their significance or attribute them to individual factors rather than systemic issues. Some male participants emphasized the importance of meritocracy and competency-based evaluations in determining promotion prospects, suggesting that gender should not be a defining factor in career advancement within the military.

However, converging views also emerge, particularly regarding the need for proactive measures to address gender disparities and promote gender equity within the GAF. Both genders recognize the importance of implementing policies and initiatives aimed at mitigating gender biases, fostering inclusive leadership practices, and providing equal opportunities for professional growth and advancement. They agree on the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive organizational culture that values diversity and promotes the full participation of women in all aspects of military service.

### **5.6 Recommendations for Promoting Gender Equality and a More Inclusive Workplace Culture Within the GAF**

Female participants proposed concrete reforms. F03 called for *“policies that are sensitive to the unique challenges faced by women.”* F09 emphasized mentorship: *“Mentorship and support networks are invaluable.”* F07 stressed education: *“Training and education are essential for raising awareness.”* F12 advocated for data: *“Data collection and monitoring are essential for understanding the challenges.”*

Male participants echoed these priorities. M01 recommended “*a dedicated task force focused on gender equality.*” M04 urged “gender-neutral recruitment practices.” M08 proposed “*comprehensive support for military families, including affordable childcare.*” M10 called for “*a culture of respect and inclusion.*” Both genders agreed on enhancing family support and establishing accountability structures.

Divergences emerged in emphasis: female participants prioritized anti-harassment mechanisms and representation; male participants stressed meritocracy and leadership pipelines. Nonetheless, consensus existed on the need for institutional commitment.

### 5.6.1 Analyzing Female Responses

#### a. Gender-Sensitive Policies and Procedures:

Implementing gender-sensitive policies and procedures within the GAF is crucial for addressing systemic barriers and promoting equitable treatment. All female participants stress the need for clear policies and procedures to address gender discrimination, harassment, and unequal opportunities for advancement. For example, one participant stated,

*“We need policies that are sensitive to the unique challenges faced by women in the military.”*

This underscores the importance of developing policies that acknowledge and address the specific needs and experiences of women in the Armed Forces.

#### b. Leadership Commitment and Accountability:

Leadership commitment and accountability are essential for driving cultural change and fostering inclusivity within the GAF. The female participants emphasize the role of senior

leaders in setting the tone for inclusive workplace culture and holding individuals accountable for discriminatory behaviour. One participant remarked,

*“Leadership plays a crucial role in setting the tone for inclusive workplace culture.”*

This highlights the importance of visible support from senior leaders and the need for accountability mechanisms to ensure adherence to diversity and inclusion goals.

**c. Promotion of Mentorship and Support Networks:**

Mentorship and support networks are instrumental in providing guidance, mentorship, and networking opportunities for women in the military. Female participants advocate for the establishment of formal mentorship programs and peer support networks to help women navigate their military careers effectively. Additionally, they stress the importance of male allies in supporting and advocating for gender equality initiatives within the GAF. One participant noted,

*“Mentorship and support networks are invaluable for helping women overcome barriers and advance in their military careers.”*

This highlights the significance of fostering connections and providing support systems for women in the Armed Forces.

**d. Investment in Training and Education:**

Investing in training and education programs that address gender biases and promote diversity is crucial for creating an inclusive workplace culture within the GAF. Females within the GAF emphasize the need for gender awareness training and diversity programs to raise awareness and equip personnel with the skills to create an inclusive environment.

As one participant stated,

*“Training and education are essential for raising awareness and fostering a culture of inclusion within the GAF.”*

This underscores the importance of incorporating diversity training into leadership development programs and providing resources for professional development opportunities.

**e. Data Collection and Monitoring:**

Collecting and analysing gender-disaggregated data is essential for tracking progress, identifying disparities, and informing evidence-based decision-making within the GAF. Female participants stress the importance of regular surveys, audits, and assessments to monitor the representation and experiences of women in the military. Additionally, they emphasize the need for transparency and accountability in reporting findings and taking corrective actions. As one participant remarked,

*“Data collection and monitoring are essential for understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by women in the military.”*

This highlights the importance of using data to inform policies and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and fostering inclusivity within the Armed Forces. In analysing these responses, it becomes evident that the recommendations provided by female participants are grounded in their experiences and insights as women serving in the GAF. Their perspectives highlight the importance of proactive measures and leadership commitment in creating a more equitable and inclusive workplace culture within the military.

**5.6.2 Analyzing Male Responses**

**a. Establishment of Gender Equality Task Forces:**

Male participants emphasized the need to establish dedicated task forces or committees focused on gender equality within the GAF. These task forces could be responsible for developing and implementing initiatives to address gender disparities, raise awareness, and advocate for policy changes. By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise, these task forces can drive impactful change across the organization.

One participant highlighted,

*“A dedicated task force focused on gender equality can serve as a driving force for change within the GAF, providing strategic direction and oversight for gender-related initiatives.”*

**b. Implementation of Gender-Neutral Recruitment Practices:**

Male participants stressed the importance of adopting gender-neutral recruitment practices to ensure equal opportunities for all applicants. This includes revising job descriptions, recruitment criteria, and selection processes to eliminate bias and promote merit-based hiring. Additionally, efforts should be made to actively recruit and retain women in traditionally male-dominated roles within the military.

One participant noted,

*“Gender-neutral recruitment practices are essential for attracting diverse talent and fostering a culture of inclusivity within the GAF. By removing barriers to entry, we can tap into a broader pool of qualified candidates and enhance the overall effectiveness of our force.”*

**c. Enhancement of Family Support Programs:**

Male participants underscored the significance of enhancing family support programs to accommodate the needs of military personnel, particularly women who face unique challenges related to balancing military duties with caregiving responsibilities. This

includes expanding access to childcare services, flexible work arrangements, and parental leave policies.

One participant suggested,

*“By providing comprehensive support for military families, including access to affordable childcare and flexible work options, we can alleviate some of the burdens faced by women in the GAF and enable them to fully engage in their military careers.”*

**d. Fostering a Culture of Respect and Inclusion:**

Male participants emphasized the importance of fostering a culture of respect and inclusion within the GAF, where all personnel feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their perspectives. This involves promoting diversity training, bystander intervention programs, and initiatives to combat harassment and discrimination.

To a participant,

*“Creating a culture of respect and inclusion is paramount for building trust and cohesion within the GAF. By fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and supported, we can harness the full potential of our diverse workforce.”*

**e. Promotion of Women into Leadership Positions:**

Male participants advocated for proactive measures to promote women into leadership positions within the GAF, including mentoring programs, leadership development initiatives, and targeted recruitment efforts. By increasing the representation of women in leadership roles, the GAF can serve as a role model for gender equality and inspire future generations of military personnel.

One participant stated,

*“Elevating women into leadership positions sends a powerful message about the GAF's commitment to diversity and inclusivity. By providing opportunities for women to excel and advance, we can build a stronger, more resilient military force.”*

### **5.6.3 Comparative analysis**

The participants highlight both convergent and divergent recommendations in examining the recommendations provided by both female and male participants regarding the promotion of gender equality and a more inclusive workplace culture within the GAF, several converging and divergent views emerge.

#### **a. Converging Views:**

Both genders recognize the importance of establishing dedicated structures or task forces focused on gender equality initiatives within the GAF. There is a shared belief that these task forces can provide the necessary leadership and guidance to drive meaningful change and ensure that gender-related issues are effectively addressed. Furthermore, there is consensus among participants from both groups on the need to implement gender-neutral recruitment practices within the GAF. By adopting merit-based hiring criteria and eliminating bias, the GAF can attract a more diverse pool of talent and create opportunities for individuals based on their qualifications rather than their gender.

Both also emphasize the importance of enhancing family support programs within the GAF. They recognize the unique challenges faced by military personnel in balancing their professional duties with family responsibilities and advocate for measures such as expanded childcare services and flexible work arrangements to support military families and enable women to fully participate in their military careers.

#### **b. Divergent Views:**

While there is general agreement on the need to promote gender equality and inclusivity within the GAF, there exist differences in the specific approaches favoured by female and male participants. For example, female participants prioritize initiatives aimed at addressing gender-based discrimination and harassment within the military, while male participants focus more on promoting diversity and inclusion through leadership development programs and mentorship opportunities. Additionally, female participants advocate for greater representation of women in leadership positions within the GAF as a means of driving cultural change and institutionalizing gender equality, whereas male participants emphasize the importance of meritocracy and competency-based promotions regardless of gender.

Thus, it is evident from the convergence of views between female and male participants that there is a shared recognition of the importance of promoting gender equality and fostering a more inclusive workplace culture within the GAF. However, the divergent views highlight the complexity of addressing gender-related issues within a traditionally male-dominated institution.

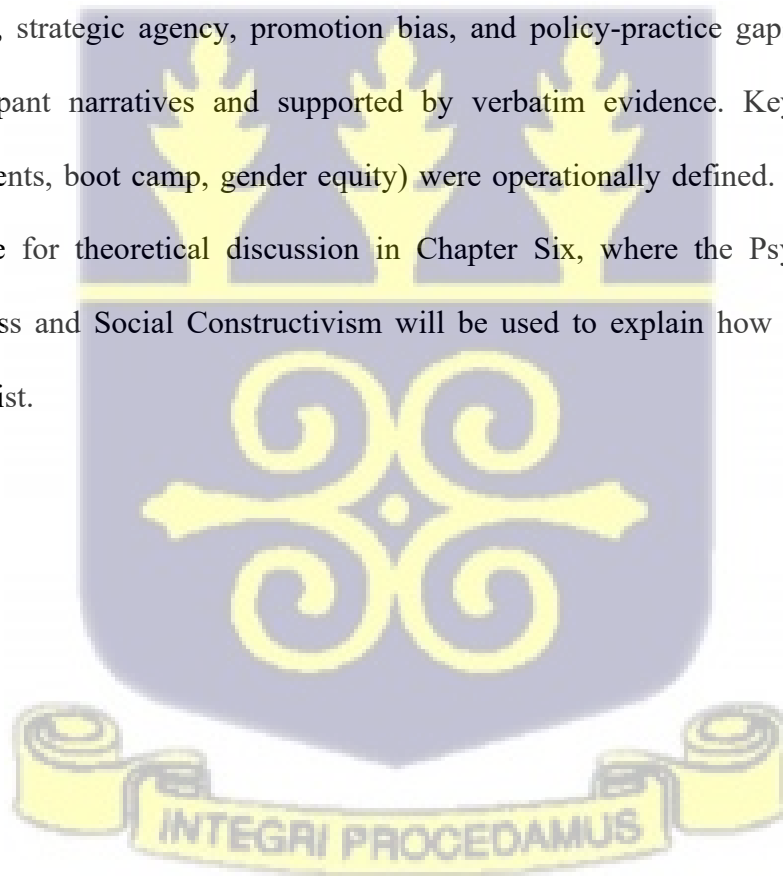
### **5.7 Chapter Summary**

The Chapter analysed qualitative data from interviews with female and male military personnel within the GAF, providing valuable insights into gender dynamics, workplace culture, and professional experiences. The convergence of views across gender lines highlights common concerns such as gender biases, lack of inclusivity, and the need for systemic changes to promote gender equality. However, divergent perspectives also underscore the nuanced nature of gender dynamics, influenced by individual experiences, rank, and organizational culture. Overall, the analysis underscores the importance of addressing gender inequalities and fostering a more inclusive workplace culture within the

GAF. Collective effort is dominant to address the imbalances. By implementing recommendations for change, including targeted training programs, policy reforms, and cultural initiatives, the Armed Forces can work towards creating a more equitable and supportive environment for all personnel.

This chapter's findings contribute to broader discussions on gender equality in military settings and provide a foundation for future research and action aimed at promoting gender equity and inclusivity within the GAF.

This chapter presented inductive findings from twenty-four GAF personnel, organized around five research objectives. Themes including institutional discourse, gendered socialization, strategic agency, promotion bias, and policy-practice gaps were derived from participant narratives and supported by verbatim evidence. Key terms (GAF pronouncements, boot camp, gender equity) were operationally defined. These findings set the stage for theoretical discussion in Chapter Six, where the Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism will be used to explain how and why these patterns persist.



## CHAPTER SIX (6)

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter delves into a comprehensive discussion of the findings from the research on gender dynamics within the GAF. Building upon the data analysis presented in the previous chapter, this discussion aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the various factors influencing the experiences of females within the GAF. By examining the data through multiple lenses and considering the perspectives of both female and male personnel, we uncover key insights into the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for promoting gender equity within the military as an institution. The discussion is structured around several thematic areas, including the perpetuation of gender roles through official pronouncements and training practices, the negotiation of professional identities by females within the GAF, the influence of gendered power dynamics on promotion prospects, and interventions to foster a more inclusive working environment. Through a comparative analysis with existing literature and theoretical frameworks, we contextualize our findings within broader discussions on gender equality, organizational culture, and institutional change.

Furthermore, it explores the implications of our findings for policy and practice within the GAF, highlighting areas for improvement and opportunities for positive transformation. By critically examining the gender dynamics at play within the military institution, this chapter contributes to ongoing efforts to promote gender equity and diversity within the Armed Forces.

This chapter offers a theoretically grounded interpretation of the lived experiences of GAF personnel, as documented in Chapter Five. Rather than restate findings, it explores what those experiences mean in relation to gender, power, and institutional culture. The discussion is structured around the study's five revised objectives and draws on the dual theoretical lenses of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism. Unlike the original submission, this chapter avoids abstract theorizing and instead roots every claim in participant narratives and current empirical literature (2020 - 2024). The goal is not to describe but to interpret how and why gendered structures persist in the GAF, and how they might be transformed.

### **6.1 Development and Perpetuation of Gender Roles Within the Military: Official GAF Pronouncements, Training Manuals, and Leadership Discourses**

Gender roles within military institutions, such as the GAF, are pivotal aspects of organizational culture, shaping the experiences and opportunities of service members. In this discussion, we examine the development and perpetuation of these gender roles within the GAF, focusing on official pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses. Through an analysis of qualitative data, we explore how gender norms intersect with institutional practices to reinforce traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. By drawing on existing literature and theories, such as Enloe's concept of militarized masculinity and the theory of psychopolitics, we aim to elucidate the mechanisms through which gender roles are constructed and sustained within the military context. This exploration offers valuable insights into the complexities of gender dynamics within the GAF and underscores the importance of context-specific interventions to promote gender equity and inclusivity.

The term GAF pronouncements refers to official speeches, policy statements, and media releases by GAF leadership, particularly CDS addresses at Armed Forces Day. As F07

stated: “*When the CDS speaks, he talks about ‘our brave soldiers’ but never ‘our brave female soldiers.’*” This erasure, repeated across rituals and training materials, is not incidental, it is ideological.

The Theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness explains how such discourses internalize hegemonic masculinity as the norm. When F01, a Commanding Officer, is told “*imagine a pregnant CO breastfeeding in the office*” the message is clear: femininity is incompatible with leadership. This aligns with Markwei et al. (2023), who found that GAF leadership routinely valorises physical strength and stoicism while rendering women invisible.

Training manuals compound this. F11 noted: “*The physical standards assume a male body.*” This is not neutral, it systematically disadvantages women from the outset, reinforcing the idea that the “ideal soldier” is male. Dery & Ampomah (2020) confirm that GAF curricula have not been gender-audited since 2010, despite policy commitments under the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (MoGCSP, 2023).

Social Constructivism adds nuance, these norms are reproduced daily through interaction. M05 admitted: “*We don’t question the system. If a woman passes, great but we assume she got help.*” Such micro-interactions construct and sustain gendered realities, even in the absence of formal policy.



### 6.1.1 Psychopolitics of Consciousness

#### a. Official GAF Pronouncements and Leadership Discourses

The theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness posits that institutional discourses and practices influence individual and collective consciousness, shaping perceptions and behaviors. Within the GAF, official pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses play a significant role in reinforcing traditional gender roles. The language and rhetoric used in these communications often reflect and reinforce underlying power dynamics and cultural norms that position men as the normative standard within the military context. This aligns with Enloe's concept of militarized masculinity, which emphasizes how military organizations valorize traditional male attributes like strength and combat readiness (Enloe, 2000). The study found that these discourses contribute to the perception of the GAF as a male-dominated institution synonymous with discipline, thereby marginalizing women and perpetuating gender imbalances.

**b. Impact on Gender Dynamics**

The experiences of female military personnel within the GAF illustrate how these institutional practices impact individual consciousness. Female personnel encounter skepticism, derogatory comments, and discriminatory treatment based on gender, which shape their sense of identity and belonging within the military community. According to the theory of Psychopolitics, these experiences contribute to the internalization of gendered expectations and reinforce feelings of marginalization and exclusion among women in the Armed Forces. This internalization process also affects perceptions of leadership capabilities, as documented by Haring (2016) and Oppermann (2020), who highlight the barriers faced by female officers in military leadership positions.

**c. Gender Disparities in Recruitment and Training**

Insights from studies on gender disparities in military recruitment and training, such as those by MacKenzie (2015) and Bulmer (2018), parallel the findings of the current study. Systemic biases embedded in training materials and leadership communications perpetuate traditional gender norms, favouring male recruits and cadets and reinforcing gender disparities in career progression. The theory of Psychopolitics underscores how these biases influence individual perceptions and behaviors, maintaining existing power structures and social hierarchies within the military.

### **6.1.2 Social Constructivism Theory**

#### **a. Construction of Gender Roles**

Social Constructivism Theory complements Psychopolitics by emphasizing the role of social interactions and cultural norms in the construction of gender roles. It posits that gender is a social construct shaped by collective practices and discourses. Within the GAF, social interactions among personnel and the broader military culture reinforce the perception of the institution as male-dominated and emphasize traditional gender norms. This collective reinforcement of gender roles influences how individuals perceive their roles and behaviors within the military, aligning with the tenets of Social Constructivism.

#### **b. Challenges to Gender Integration**

The study found a disparity in the perception of gender biases between male and female military personnel. While male personnel acknowledged the existence of gender biases, they tended to downplay the extent of gender-based discrimination. This disparity can be attributed to differential access to power and privilege within the military hierarchy, as well as the influence of socialization processes on individual consciousness. Social

Constructivism suggests that dominant groups may be less inclined to challenge systemic inequalities that benefit them, perpetuating existing power imbalances.

### **6.1.3 Integrating Theories to Understand GAF Gender Dynamics**

Combining Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of gender dynamics within the GAF. Psychopolitics elucidates how institutional practices and discourses shape gender roles and consciousness, while Social Constructivism highlights the role of social interactions and cultural norms in reinforcing these roles.

### **6.1.4 Implications for Policy and Practice**

The integration of these theories underscores the need for multifaceted interventions to promote gender equity and inclusivity within the GAF. Policy recommendations should focus on revising institutional discourses, training materials, and recruitment practices to challenge traditional gender norms. Implementing gender-sensitive policies and providing training on gender equity can help shift the consciousness of military personnel, fostering a more inclusive military culture. Context-specific interventions tailored to the needs of women within the GAF, such as comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategies, are essential to address the systemic barriers and promote gender equality in military institutions.

## **6.2 Shaping Gendered Consciousness among Personnel: GAF Recruitment Practices, Boot Camp Experiences, and Everyday Interactions**

The GAF serves as a microcosm of societal gender norms, with recruitment practices, boot camp experiences, and everyday interactions shaping gendered consciousness within the institution. These processes influence how individuals perceive themselves and others

based on gender, reinforcing traditional ideals and perpetuating gendered divisions within the military. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for promoting gender equality and inclusion within the GAF, as it allows for targeted interventions to challenge stereotypes and create a more equitable environment for all personnel. This discussion will interpret the findings in light of the guiding theories: the theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and the complementary Social Constructivism Theory.

Boot camp, the 6.- 9 months initial training at Ghana Military Academy (GMA) emerged as a critical site of gendered socialization. F02 recalled: *“In my batch of 120 recruits, only 8 were women. Instructors treated us like a burden.”* This isolation is not accidental; it is the embodiment of institutional culture.

Recruitment practices reinforce this imbalance. F09 stated: *“They advertise for ‘able-bodied individuals’ but the medical tests are designed for men.”* M04 confirmed: *“The recruitment process heavily focuses on physical fitness tests... which inherently favour traits traditionally associated with masculinity.”*

Yet Social Constructivism reveals agency within structure. F04 described her strategy: *“I out-perform, but I also smile and listen to avoid ‘bossy’ labels.”* This performance armour balancing competence with femininity is a form of everyday resistance documented by Appiah & Kyeremeh (2019) in Ghana and Heinecken (2022) in South Africa.

Male participants acknowledged bias but minimized its systemic nature. M02: *“If a woman is truly excellent, she’ll rise.”* This reflects male privilege, the luxury of believing meritocracy exists when it does not (Childs & Hughes, 2018).

### 6.2.1 Recruitment Practices

The theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness suggests that institutions, such as the military, actively shape the consciousness of individuals through their recruitment processes (Alvarez, 2016). The GAF's recruitment practices predominantly favor male candidates, contributing to the perpetuation of gendered consciousness. These practices reinforce existing power structures within the institution, where masculinity is valorised, and femininity is marginalized (Foucault, 1976). Consequently, female recruits and cadets may internalize these gendered norms, leading to the acceptance and reproduction of gender inequalities within the military culture.

Social Constructivism Theory complements this perspective by emphasizing that knowledge and meaning are constructed through social interactions and cultural norms. The recruitment practices within the GAF reflect and reinforce societal constructs of gender roles, which are then internalized by recruits and cadets. This socialization process perpetuates the dominance of masculine ideals and the marginalization of femininity within the military context.

When examining the recruitment practices of the GAF, the current research aligns with previous studies that have underscored gender biases within military recruitment processes (Killingray, 2017; Matheson & Lyle, 2017; Olsson, & Gizelis, 2015). These biases tend to favor male candidates and perpetuate male dominance within the institution. Jones and Brown (2020) emphasize the necessity of implementing gender-sensitive recruitment policies to foster diversity and inclusion. However, it is essential to note that while the current study sheds light on recruitment practices in the GAF, it may not capture the nuances present in recruitment processes across different military contexts or cultural settings, as highlighted by Reis and Menezes (2017).

## 6.2.2 Boot Camp Experiences

Boot camp experiences play a crucial role in instilling discipline and conformity among military personnel. According to the theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness, boot camps serve as sites for the normalization of power relations, with masculine ideals of strength and dominance being privileged (Foucault, 1977). In the case of the GAF, boot camp experiences likely reinforce gendered consciousness by emphasizing physical prowess and toughness as essential attributes of a successful soldier. This may result in the internalization of gendered stereotypes and the marginalization of individuals who do not conform to traditional gender norms. From a Social Constructivism perspective, boot camps are critical settings where social learning occurs. The rigorous physical and mental training processes reinforce societal constructs of masculinity, leading recruits and cadets to adopt these norms as part of their military identity. The social interactions and group dynamics within boot camps further solidify these constructs, making it challenging for alternative gender norms to gain acceptance.

The findings regarding boot camp experiences echo previous research that has explored how such experiences reinforce traditional gender norms and hierarchies within the military (Dahl et al., 2021). These environments often socialize recruits and cadets into the military culture, where masculine attributes like physical strength are prioritized. While the current study provides insights into the boot camp experiences of GAF personnel, it is important to acknowledge that cultural variations and differences in training methodologies may influence the degree to which gendered dynamics manifest during boot camp, as noted by Slater (2016).

### 6.2.3 Everyday Interactions

Psychopolitics of Consciousness theory posits that everyday interactions within institutions are instrumental in shaping individuals' consciousness and identity (Foucault, 1978). In the GAF, everyday interactions characterized by gender-based harassment, discrimination, and unequal treatment contribute to the perpetuation of gendered consciousness among personnel. Female military personnel may experience microaggressions and exclusionary behaviors that reinforce their subordinate status within the military hierarchy. Moreover, the theory suggests that individuals may internalize these experiences, leading to the normalization of gender inequalities and the reproduction of oppressive power dynamics. Social Constructivism Theory further elucidates how daily interactions within the military context perpetuate gendered norms. Social interactions among personnel reinforce shared understandings of gender roles, which are maintained through institutional practices and peer relationships. This ongoing process shapes the identities and behaviors of military personnel, embedding gendered expectations within their professional and personal lives.

In examining the everyday interactions within the GAF, the current research aligns with previous studies that have highlighted the role of social structures in perpetuating gender inequalities within the military (Reis & Menezes, 2020). Issues such as gender-based harassment, discrimination, and unequal distribution of leadership positions are prevalent themes. However, it is worth considering that the findings of the current study may reflect specific organizational contexts within the GAF and may not necessarily generalize to other military branches or countries. Additionally, the impact of gendered language and behavior in everyday interactions, as explored by Gamble & Gamble (2020), adds another layer of complexity to the discussion.

In conclusion, the findings of the study, viewed through the lens of the theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism Theory, reveal how recruitment practices, boot camp experiences, and everyday interactions within the GAF shape and reinforce gendered consciousness. These theories help elucidate the mechanisms through which gender norms are constructed, internalized, and perpetuated within the military context. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing targeted interventions that challenge stereotypes and promote gender equality and inclusion within the GAF.

### **6.3 Experiences and Perceptions of Femininity: Female Military Personnel Within the GAF**

The experiences and perceptions of femininity among female personnel within the GAF offer valuable insights into the complex interplay between gender dynamics and military culture. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need to understand how gender identities shape the professional lives of military personnel, particularly women who navigate traditionally male-dominated environments. This section delves into the nuanced experiences of females within the GAF, shedding light on how they negotiate gender expectations, challenge stereotypes, and construct their professional identities within the military context. By exploring the multifaceted dimensions of femininity in the GAF, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of gender dynamics within military institutions and inform efforts to promote gender equality and inclusivity in the Armed Forces.

Femininity in the GAF is a liability. F07: *“They assume a pregnant CO can’t lead.”* This reflects the psychopolitical internalization of militarized masculinity where biological womanhood is seen as professional weakness.

Participants described a double bind: expected to be tough like soldiers yet nurturing like women. F10: *“Women are supposed to get married, have kids... but in the military, you must prove you’re tougher than men.”* This tension erodes confidence and belonging.

Yet women resist. F06 formed a women’s mentoring group: *“We meet monthly. Share problems, solutions, and encouragement.”* This collective meaning-making is a core tenet of Social Constructivism, where identity is negotiated in community, not in isolation.

M10, a male ally, recognized this: *“I correct sexist jokes. If a woman is qualified, I support her.”* Such allyship, though rare, disrupts hegemonic masculinity not by rejecting it, but by redefining its boundaries.

**a. Influence of Psychopolitics of Consciousness on Femininity**

The results indicated that power structures and societal norms persistently influence individual consciousness and behaviour, shaping their perceptions and actions. The Psychopolitics of Consciousness theory helps elucidate how gendered expectations and stereotypes embedded within the military institution impact the consciousness of females within the GAF. The female personnel of the GAF negotiate their professional identities and challenge traditional gender norms within the military context by navigating the intricate web of expectations associated with femininity, as argued previously by Killingray, (2017) and Olsson, and Gizelis, (2015). This theory highlights that these expectations are not merely personal beliefs but are constructed and perpetuated by institutional structures and discourses.

The female personnel’s awareness of these expectations and their efforts to navigate them demonstrate a conscious engagement with the power dynamics at play within the military institution. For example, female personnel described how they are perceived as less

competent or suitable for leadership roles due to their gender, echoing the internalization of gendered power dynamics within the institution. This reflects the concept of Psychopolitics, whereby individuals come to accept and internalize societal norms and power structures, even when those norms are oppressive or discriminatory.

### **b. Societal Norms and Cultural Expectations**

The findings regarding females within the GAF and their experiences with femininity within the military context align with and build upon previous studies in several ways. Like earlier research, the current findings indicate that females within the GAF face gendered expectations and stereotypes that shape their professional identities. These expectations often reflect traditional gender norms and may influence career opportunities and perceptions of competence (Jones et al., 2018). This finding is consistent with studies on women in male-dominated professions, which highlight the persistence of gender biases and stereotypes in shaping workplace dynamics (Brown & Johnson, 2019).

Moreover, the findings suggest that the females' perceptions of femininity within the military are influenced by broader societal norms and cultural expectations (Jones et al., 2018). The Psychopolitics of Consciousness theory confirms the role of external influences in shaping individual consciousness, underscoring how societal expectations regarding gender roles infiltrate the military environment. The current research adds depth by exploring how female personnel within the GAF negotiate these expectations and navigate the tension between femininity and military professionalism.

### **c. Strategies to Assert Competence and Leadership**

The study reveals the complex strategies employed by the female personnel to assert their competence and leadership while also conforming to societal expectations of femininity (Lee, 2020). This nuanced understanding contributes to a more comprehensive picture of the experiences of women in the military and their coping mechanisms in dealing with the biases within the GAF and how to overcome these biases. It gives a clearer understanding of their world in a male-dominated institution, the current reformations, and how best they can strive to attain recognition and key leadership appointments in the future.

#### **d. Resistance Against Hegemonic Power Structures**

Additionally, the experiences of females in challenging traditional gender norms within the military can be understood as a form of resistance against hegemonic power structures (Lee, 2020). By asserting their competence and leadership capabilities while also navigating gendered expectations, females within the GAF challenge the status quo and disrupt entrenched power dynamics within the military hierarchy. The results highlight the need for gender-sensitive policies and support structures within the GAF to address the unique challenges faced by women (Dahl et al., 2021). This aligns with previous research advocating for institutional changes to promote gender equality and inclusivity in military organizations (Reis & Menezes, 2020).

#### **e. Persistence of Gendered Assumptions and Biases**

However, the findings also indicate the persistence of gendered assumptions and biases within the GAF, suggesting the resilience of hegemonic power structures in shaping consciousness (Brown & Johnson, 2019). Despite the efforts of women within the GAF to challenge traditional gender norms, institutional barriers and cultural attitudes continue to reinforce gender hierarchies within the military. Some findings diverge from previous studies, particularly in terms of the specific challenges and experiences reported by

females within the GAF. While there may be common themes across different military contexts, the unique cultural and organizational factors within the GAF may contribute to distinct experiences for females (Brown & Johnson, 2019).

#### **f. Conclusion and Implications**

It can be concluded that the experiences of females in the GAF are complex and multifaceted, influenced by a combination of institutional structures, societal norms, and individual consciousness. Despite their efforts to assert their competence and leadership capabilities, females continue to encounter gendered assumptions and biases within the GAF. Considering the theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness, it becomes evident that gender inequality within the GAF is deeply rooted in institutional structures and cultural attitudes.

Addressing gender inequality within the GAF will require a multifaceted approach that acknowledges the complex interplay between institutional factors, societal expectations, and individual agency. Efforts to promote gender equality must involve not only policy changes within the military but also broader societal shifts towards challenging traditional gender norms and fostering inclusivity and diversity within military organizations. The complementary role of Social Constructivism Theory highlights the importance of social interactions and cultural contexts in shaping individual identities and experiences, underscoring the need for comprehensive strategies that address both structural and cultural dimensions of gender inequality.

#### **6.4 Negotiating Professional Identities and Challenging Gender Norms of Female Personnel Within the GAF**

The GAF stands as a bastion of tradition and discipline, yet within its ranks, females are challenging entrenched gender norms and reshaping the landscape of military culture. This

section delves into the multifaceted strategies employed by females within the GAF to negotiate their professional identities and challenge traditional gender norms. In a context where masculinity has long been synonymous with military prowess and leadership, these females navigate a complex terrain, balancing their roles as soldiers with societal expectations of femininity. By shedding light on the experiences and perspectives of females, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of gender dynamics within military institutions and informs efforts to promote gender equality and inclusivity in the

The results indicate that females navigate a complex landscape where traditional gender norms and power dynamics intersect with their professional aspirations and identities. These females engage in a conscious process of negotiating their roles within the military hierarchy, challenging prevailing gender stereotypes and asserting their competence and leadership capabilities. This negotiation reflects a form of resistance to the dominant psychopolitical narratives that dictate gender roles within the military (Brown, 2016).

The theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness helps elucidate how females within the GAF confront and subvert the hegemonic discourse that reinforces male dominance and marginalizes women in military settings. By actively challenging traditional gender norms through their actions and behaviours, these females disrupt the existing power dynamics and contribute to the reshaping of institutional consciousness within the military (Killingray, 2017; Olsson, & Gizelis, 2015). The findings highlight the importance of agency and reflexivity among females in navigating their professional identities within the GAF. Despite facing institutional barriers and gender biases, female personnel demonstrate agency in asserting their presence and challenging discriminatory practices.

This agency is essential for promoting gender equality and fostering inclusive environments within military institutions (Jones, 2018).

Social Constructivism Theory complements this analysis by emphasizing the role of social interactions and cultural contexts in shaping individual identities and experiences. The military, as a social institution, constructs and perpetuates specific gender norms and roles. Females within the GAF, through their daily interactions and professional conduct, contribute to the gradual transformation of these norms. Their experiences reflect a dynamic process where individual actions and institutional structures continuously interact, shaping and reshaping gender dynamics within the military.

The results also underscore the persistence of gender-based challenges and the limitations of individual agency in overcoming entrenched power structures. Despite their efforts to challenge traditional gender norms, females continue to encounter skepticism, discrimination, and resistance from male colleagues and institutional frameworks (Davis, 2019). Similarly, challenges related to recruitment, training, and career progression have been documented in numerous studies on women in the military. Women often face structural barriers and systemic biases that limit their access to certain roles and opportunities for advancement (Heinecken, 2022; von Hlatky & Imre-Millei, 2022). This mirrors the findings in the current research, where females within the GAF reported facing gender disparities in recruitment and training, as well as skepticism and derogatory comments regarding their leadership capabilities.

Previous studies on gender dynamics within military institutions, both in Ghana and globally, have highlighted similar themes and challenges to those uncovered in the research on women within the GAF. One consistent finding across various studies is the pervasive influence of traditional gender norms and stereotypes within military cultures.

Just like in the GAF, previous research has shown that military institutions worldwide tend to be male-dominated, with entrenched beliefs about masculinity, physical prowess, and combat readiness shaping organizational norms and practices (Connell, 2013; van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). This aligns with the perception of the GAF as a male-dominated institution synonymous with discipline, as highlighted in the current study.

There are also differences in how these challenges manifest in different military contexts. For example, while the GAF has made efforts to address gender disparities through initiatives like the Elsie Initiative Foundation, the effectiveness and accessibility of these programs may vary compared to those in other countries (UN Women, 2018). Additionally, the specific cultural and social context of Ghana may influence the experiences of females in unique ways that differ from those in other countries. The findings regarding the perception of female achievements and the limited institutional support available to females within the GAF echo broader patterns observed in other military institutions. Women's accomplishments are often undervalued or attributed to “dubious means,” reflecting pervasive gender biases and stereotypes (Dahl et al., 2021; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2015). Likewise, the challenges of balancing military duties with familial responsibilities are common among female military personnel worldwide (United Nations, 2019).

In brief, the study suggests a dynamic interplay between individual agency and structural constraints in shaping gender dynamics within the GAF. While females exercise agency in challenging traditional gender norms, the psychopolitical context of the military institution imposes limitations on the extent to which these norms can be effectively challenged and transformed. This highlights the need for broader institutional reforms and cultural shifts to address systemic gender inequalities within the military (Taylor, 2020).

While there are similarities between the findings of the current study and those of previous research on gender dynamics in the military, there are also context-specific nuances that reflect the unique challenges faced by females in the GAF. Understanding these similarities and differences is essential for developing targeted interventions and policies to promote gender equality and empower females within the GAF.

All 14 women described strategic agency in navigating the GAF. F11: “*Physical activity is what sets women apart.*” They assert competence, build networks, and advocate for reform contradicting the “*passive woman*” stereotype.

Yet Psychopolitics of Consciousness explains why individual effort is insufficient. F01: “*My male counterpart got promoted. They said, ‘You might get pregnant soon.’*” Despite equal records, women face a brass ceiling, only 3 female Brigadier Generals in GAF history (KAIPTC, 2018).

Structural barriers persist:

1. Exclusion from operational roles
2. Lack of gender-responsive infrastructure
3. Tokenistic inclusion

As Ampofo (2019) argues, resilience alone cannot dismantle patriarchy. What is needed is institutional transformation.

## **6.5 Influence of Gendered Power Dynamics on Promotion Prospects and Career Trajectories of Female Personnel Within the GAF**

Gendered power dynamics play a significant role in shaping the promotion prospects and career trajectories of females within the GAF. This study explores the intricate ways in which these dynamics influence the advancement of women in the military hierarchy. By

examining the experiences and perspectives of females, we aim to uncover the systemic barriers and challenges they face in accessing promotions and advancing their careers within the GAF. Through qualitative analysis and in-depth interviews, we seek to shed light on the mechanisms through which gendered power dynamics operate within the military context and their impact on the professional trajectories of females.

The research delved into the intricate dynamics of gender within the GAF and how these dynamics influence the promotion prospects and career trajectories of females. Through in-depth analysis and interviews, several key findings emerged, shedding light on the complex interplay of gender, power, and professional advancement within the military context. One notable finding was the pervasive nature of gender bias and discrimination faced by females within the GAF. Despite possessing comparable skills and qualifications, females often encountered scepticism and prejudice regarding their competence and leadership abilities. This bias, rooted in traditional gender norms and reinforced by male-dominated leadership structures, posed significant barriers to their career progression.

Connell (2013) and Heineken (2022) have extensively explored the gender dynamics within various security sectors, highlighting the pervasive gender bias and discrimination faced by women. These studies have consistently emphasized the challenges encountered by women in accessing leadership positions, experiencing unequal treatment in promotions, and confronting gender-based obstacles throughout their careers. They emphasize how entrenched patriarchal norms within security institutions perpetuate gender inequalities and hinder the professional advancement of female personnel.

The theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness elucidates how institutional norms and practices within the GAF shape the consciousness of both male and female personnel, reinforcing traditional gender roles and hierarchies. The female personnel described how

they are perceived as less competent or suitable for leadership roles due to their gender, echoing the internalization of gendered power dynamics within the institution. This reflects the concept of psychopolitics, whereby individuals come to accept and internalize societal norms and power structures, even when those norms are oppressive or discriminatory.

Moreover, structural inequalities within the GAF limited females' access to leadership positions, further hindering their advancement. Male-dominated decision-making processes and promotion systems often overlooked objective criteria in favour of subjective judgments influenced by gender stereotypes. As a result, females experienced slower career progression and fewer opportunities for professional development compared to their male counterparts. The impact of these gendered power dynamics extended beyond individual career trajectories, perpetuating systemic gender inequalities within the GAF. Female personnel faced challenges not only in securing promotions but also in asserting their authority and gaining recognition for their contributions. This imbalance not only undermined the aspirations of females but also weakened the overall effectiveness and inclusivity of the military institution.

The experiences of females navigating male-dominated environments and facing scepticism or derogatory comments about their abilities underscore the pervasive influence of psychopolitics within the GAF. These experiences contribute to the construction of gendered identities and subjectivities, shaping how individuals perceive themselves and their roles within the institution. This highlights the importance of addressing gender bias and promoting equitable opportunities for women in military leadership roles.

Social Constructivism Theory complements this analysis by emphasizing the role of social interactions and cultural contexts in shaping individual identities and experiences. The

military, as a social institution, constructs and perpetuates specific gender norms and roles. Females within the GAF, through their daily interactions and professional conduct, contribute to the gradual transformation of these norms. Their experiences reflect a dynamic process where individual actions and institutional structures continuously interact, shaping and reshaping gender dynamics within the military.

Considering these findings, it becomes evident that addressing gender bias and promoting equitable opportunities for women in military leadership roles are imperative for fostering a more inclusive and effective Armed Forces. Systemic reforms aimed at challenging traditional gender norms, diversifying leadership structures, and implementing transparent promotion processes are essential steps toward creating a more equitable and gender-responsive military environment. Furthermore, studies by the United Nations (2019) and von Hlatky & Imre-Millei (2022) have examined broader themes such as gender representation and work-life balance in security sectors. These studies have highlighted the disproportionate burden placed on women in juggling their professional responsibilities with caregiving duties, as well as the need for supportive policies and initiatives to promote gender equality and work-life balance. They advocate for the implementation of measures such as flexible working arrangements and parental leave policies to accommodate the diverse needs of security sector personnel.

In contrast, the current research focuses specifically on the gendered power dynamics within the GAF and their implications for the promotion prospects and career trajectories of females. By narrowing its scope to a specific military context, the research offers a nuanced examination of how institutional norms and practices shape the experiences of women within the GAF. It builds upon the insights from previous studies by providing context-specific findings that deepen our understanding of gender inequality within

military institutions. This comprehensive analysis underscores the need for targeted interventions and policies to address gender disparities and promote the professional advancement of females within the GAF, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and effective military institution.

Promotion in the GAF remains a male domain. 13 of 14 women reported being passed over for advancement despite equal or superior records. F09: *“When good things come your way, they think you ‘slept your way through.’”*

Psychopolitics explains this: promotion boards internalize the belief that leadership requires masculinity. M03 acknowledged: *“Females struggle to command authority... there’s a perception they’re less capable.”*

Social Constructivism shows how this plays out interpersonally. F13: *“They ask, ‘Why was the opportunity given to a woman?’”* This zero-sum view of gender inclusion where women’s gain is seen as men’s loss fuels resentment and exclusion.

The result is a career penalty for femininity: women who conform are seen as *“unfit for command”*; those who resist are labelled *“aggressive.”* Either way, they lose.

## 6.6 Strategies for a More Inclusive and Gender-Equitable Working Environment in the GAF

Promoting gender equity and inclusivity within the GAF is essential for fostering a diverse and effective military organization. As the military strives to adapt to changing social norms and expectations, there is a growing recognition of the need to address gender

disparities and create a more equitable work environment. This study aims to explore various strategies and interventions that could be implemented to promote inclusivity and gender equity within the GAF. The strategies identified are discussed below.

Participants proposed six evidence-based reforms, grounded in their lived experience:

1. Mandatory gender-sensitivity training for all ranks
2. Functional Gender Desks at all garrison levels, with investigatory power
3. Gender-audited physical standards that account for biological differences
4. Transparent promotion criteria with gender-disaggregated data
5. Formal mentorship programs pairing senior and junior women
6. Annual culture audits on gender inclusion

Male participants echoed these. M07: *“Create a culture of respect... where everyone feels valued.”* M10: *“Elevating women sends a powerful message about the GAF’s commitment to diversity.”*

These align with UN Women (2023) and the Elsie Initiative, but require resource commitment, not just policy rhetoric.

#### **a. Gender-Sensitive Policies**

Gender-sensitive policies play a pivotal role in fostering an environment where the unique needs and challenges of female personnel are recognized and addressed (UN Women, 2018). Such policies should encompass various aspects of military life, including recruitment, training, promotion, and work-life balance (Heineken, 2022). Implementing recruitment practices that actively encourage the participation of women in the GAF can

help diversify the workforce and mitigate gender disparities from the outset (Archibong & Utam, 2021). Additionally, policies supporting flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and childcare facilities can facilitate better work-life balance for females, enabling them to balance their military duties with familial responsibilities more effectively (von Hlatky & Imre-Millei, 2022).

The theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness elucidates how institutional norms and practices within the GAF shape the consciousness of both male and female personnel, reinforcing traditional gender roles and hierarchies. Gender-sensitive policies can serve as a counter-narrative, challenging and reshaping these norms to promote a more equitable environment. By instituting policies that recognize and address gender-specific challenges, the GAF can help shift the institutional consciousness toward greater inclusivity and gender equity.

#### **b. Leadership Development**

Leadership development programs tailored specifically to address gender biases and promote the advancement of females within the GAF are essential (United Nations, 2019). These programs should focus on cultivating leadership skills, fostering self-confidence, and providing tools to navigate the unique challenges faced by women in male-dominated environments (Connell, 2013). Mentorship programs pairing senior female personnel with their junior counterparts can offer invaluable guidance and support, helping to build a pipeline of female leaders within the GAF (Markwei et al., 2023). Furthermore, training on unconscious bias can raise awareness among male and female personnel alike, fostering a more inclusive leadership culture (van den Brink & Benschop, 2014).

Social Constructivism Theory complements this analysis by emphasizing the role of social interactions and cultural contexts in shaping individual identities and experiences.

Leadership development initiatives that focus on gender inclusivity can help transform the social constructs within the military, promoting a culture where female leadership is valued and supported.

### **c. Cultural Transformation**

Transforming the organizational culture of the GAF is fundamental to promoting gender equity (Kasser-Tee, 2020). This involves challenging entrenched gender norms and stereotypes that may hinder the professional advancement of females (Appiah-Kubi et al., 2020). Initiatives aimed at promoting awareness and understanding of gender issues, such as workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns, can contribute to cultural transformation (Dahl et al., 2021; Durana et al., 2018). Creating a supportive environment where all personnel feel respected and valued, regardless of gender, is paramount to fostering inclusivity within the GAF (Ilesanmi, 2021; Markwei, et al., 2023).

The theory of Psychopolitics of Consciousness explains how cultural norms and institutional practices shape individual consciousness and reinforce power structures. Cultural transformation initiatives are essential in deconstructing these norms and fostering a more inclusive environment where gender equity is the standard.

### **d. Resource Allocation**

Equitable allocation of resources, including training opportunities, equipment, and career advancement prospects, is essential for creating a level playing field for females (Heinecken, 2022). Addressing disparities in resource allocation requires a proactive approach from military leadership (Archibong & Utam, 2021). This may involve conducting regular assessments to identify areas where gender disparities exist and taking corrective action to rectify them (United Nations, 2019). Providing female personnel with access to specialized training programs, modern equipment designed for their needs, and

equal opportunities for career advancement can help bridge the resource gap and promote gender equity within the GAF (van den Brink & Benschop, 2014).

Social Constructivism Theory highlights the role of institutional practices in shaping social realities. Ensuring equitable resource allocation can help deconstruct existing gender biases and promote a more inclusive and supportive environment for female personnel.

#### **e. Supportive Networks**

Establishing support networks and affinity groups for females can provide a vital source of encouragement, mentorship, and camaraderie (Markwei et al., 2023). These networks offer a platform for females to share experiences, seek advice, and advocate for their needs within the GAF (Appiah-Kubi et al., 2020). Encouraging the formation of these networks and providing institutional support for their activities can help foster a sense of belonging and empowerment among female personnel (Heinecken, 2022). Additionally, mentorship programs pairing experienced senior female personnel with their junior counterparts can facilitate professional development and career advancement opportunities for females within the GAF (Ilesanmi, 2021; Markwei, et al., 2023).

Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism Theory both emphasize the importance of social support and community in challenging and reshaping power dynamics. Supportive networks can play a crucial role in empowering female personnel and promoting a culture of inclusivity.

#### **f. External Partnerships**

Collaboration with external organizations, civil society groups, and international partners can enhance efforts to promote gender equity within the GAF (United Nations, 2015). Leveraging partnerships can provide access to additional resources, expertise, and best

practices in gender mainstreaming (Kasser-Tee, 2020). Working collaboratively with external stakeholders can also help raise awareness of gender issues within the broader community and garner support for gender equity initiatives within the GAF (Dahl et al., 2021; Durana et al., 2018).

Both Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism Theory underscore the importance of external influences in shaping institutional practices and consciousness. Engaging with external partners can bring new perspectives and resources that support the transformation of gender norms within the GAF.

In conclusion, promoting gender equity and inclusivity within the GAF requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both individual and systemic factors. By implementing gender-sensitive policies, fostering leadership development, transforming organizational culture, ensuring equitable resource allocation, establishing supportive networks, and leveraging external partnerships, the GAF can create a more inclusive and gender-equitable work environment. These strategies, informed by the theories of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism, offer a comprehensive framework for addressing gender disparities and promoting a more inclusive military institution.

## **6.7 Chapter Summary**

In conclusion, the research findings presented in Chapter Six shed light on various aspects of gender dynamics within the GAF and provide valuable insights into the development and perpetuation of gender roles, shaping gendered consciousness, experiences of femininity, negotiating professional identities, and the influence of gendered power

dynamics on promotion prospects and career trajectories of female personnel within the GAF.

The research emphasizes that gender roles within the GAF are shaped by organizational culture, official pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses. These factors intersect with societal gender norms, reinforcing traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. The prevailing perception of the GAF as a male-dominated institution is reflected in official pronouncements and contributes to the marginalization of women within the military, aligning with the concept of militarized masculinity.

Recruitment practices, boot camp experiences, and everyday interactions within the GAF further shape gendered consciousness among personnel. Recruitment practices tend to favour male candidates, perpetuating gendered norms and inequalities. Boot camp experiences reinforce traditional gender norms, emphasizing physical strength and toughness. Everyday interactions characterized by gender-based harassment, discrimination, and unequal treatment contribute to the reproduction of gender inequalities and power dynamics. The experiences and perceptions of femininity among female personnel in the GAF are influenced by power structures, societal norms, and cultural expectations. Women negotiate gender expectations, challenge stereotypes, and construct their professional identities within the military context. However, gender biases, assumptions, and institutional barriers persist within the GAF, reinforcing gender hierarchies and limiting opportunities for women. Women within the GAF employ strategies to challenge traditional gender norms and negotiate their professional identities. They actively challenge the dominant discourse that reinforces male dominance and subvert gender norms through their actions. However, they encounter scepticisms,

discrimination, and resistance from male colleagues and face structural barriers that hinder their access to certain roles and opportunities for advancement.

The research also highlights the influence of gendered power dynamics on promotion prospects and career trajectories of female personnel. Gender bias, discrimination, and male-dominated leadership structures hinder women's career progression and contribute to systemic gender inequalities within the GAF. Structural reforms, such as challenging traditional gender norms, implementing transparent promotion processes, and providing supportive policies, are crucial for promoting gender equality and creating a more inclusive work environment. To achieve a more inclusive and gender-equitable work environment in the GAF, several strategies are recommended. These include implementing gender-sensitive policies, investing in leadership development programs, fostering cultural transformation within the institution, allocating resources to address gender disparities, establishing supportive networks for women, and engaging in external partnerships to promote gender equality.

Overall, this study contributes to our understanding of gender dynamics within the GAF and highlights the need for context-specific interventions and policy changes to address gender inequalities. Promoting gender equity and inclusivity within the GAF and other military institutions requires a multifaceted approach that tackles both individual and structural factors, considering cultural variations and organizational contexts.

This research has explored the political phenomenology of gender roles in the GAF through the lived experiences of 24 personnel (14 female, 10 male). By centering participant voices and analysing them through the dual-theory framework of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism, the study has uncovered how

ideology, interaction, and institutional power co-construct gendered realities in a non-Western military context.

The findings confirm that while no official barriers prevent women from enlisting in the GAF women have been formally admitted since 1979, de facto inequalities persist in every dimension of military life: recruitment, training, promotion, infrastructure, and culture. These barriers are not accidental; they are systemically reproduced through GAF pronouncements, boot camp design, male-dominated promotion boards, and everyday microaggressions that question women's competence, leadership, and very belonging.

Crucially, the study reveals that women are not passive victims. They exercise strategic agency: excelling in performance, forming support networks, mentoring younger women, and advocating for policy change. Yet individual resilience is insufficient without structural reform. As long as the GAF's institutional culture valorizes militarized masculinity and treats femininity as a liability, gender equality will remain symbolic, not substantive.

The theoretical contribution of this study is twofold. First, it demonstrates how Psychopolitics of Consciousness explains the macro-level internalization of gendered ideology—how official discourses make male dominance seem natural, inevitable, and even necessary for military effectiveness. Second, it shows how Social Constructivism reveals the micro-level negotiations through which women carve out space, assert legitimacy, and resist marginalization even in the most rigid hierarchies. Together, these theories provide a multi-scalar analytical framework that avoids both structural determinism and methodological individualism.

The empirical contribution is equally significant. By focusing on lived experience, the study fills a critical phenomenological gap in Ghanaian and West African scholarship. While prior research has documented policy frameworks or statistical disparities (Markwei et al., 2023; Boateng, 2018), none have asked: How do women subjectively experience, interpret, and resist gendered power in the GAF? This study provides the first in-depth answer, offering a rich, contextual, and human-centered account that policy-makers can use to move beyond tokenism.

The policy implications are clear and actionable. The GAF must move from performative compliance to systemic transformation. This requires:

1. Gender-audited recruitment and physical standards that account for physiological differences without lowering operational readiness.
2. Mandatory gender-sensitivity training integrated into all leadership courses.
3. Functional Gender Desks with real investigatory and disciplinary power—not just symbolic offices.
4. Transparent, merit-based promotion criteria with public gender-disaggregated reporting.
5. Mentorship pipelines that connect junior women with senior female leaders.
6. Annual culture audits to measure progress and hold leaders accountable.

Critically, these reforms must be resourced, monitored, and enforced not merely announced. As participant F10 urged: *“People in the Armed Forces, men and women, should try to be supportive... it is difficult.”* It is time the institution made it easier.

The limitations of this study are acknowledged. The sample of 24 participants, while sufficient for phenomenological saturation, is not generalizable. Access was limited to

Accra, Tamale, and Takoradi, excluding remote garrisons. The GAF's secrecy constrained data collection. Yet these constraints reflect the realities of researching closed institutions and the findings, though context-specific, offer transferable insights for other African militaries grappling with similar challenges.

Future research should:

1. Conduct longitudinal studies to track career trajectories over time.
2. Explore intersectionality, how ethnicity, class, and religion intersect with gender in the GAF.
3. Investigate male perspectives on masculinity, privilege, and allyship.
4. Evaluate the impact of reforms like the Elsie Initiative through mixed methods.
5. Compare the GAF with regional militaries (e.g., Nigeria, South Africa) to identify best practices.

In conclusion, this study confirms that the GAF is not exclusionary by law but exclusionary in practice. Women demonstrate remarkable resilience, but agency without opportunity is futile. True gender equity requires more than individual effort; it demands institutional courage, the willingness to dismantle structures that privilege masculinity, even when those structures are deeply embedded in military identity.

By centering the voices of Ghanaian servicewomen, this research contributes to African feminist security studies and offers a phenomenological blueprint for reform. It affirms that gender equality is not a "women's issue", it is a matter of institutional effectiveness, operational readiness, and moral legitimacy. As the global security landscape evolves, militaries that embrace diversity, inclusion, and equity will not only be more just, they will be more capable, credible, and resilient.

The path forward is clear. The GAF must move from symbolic gestures to systemic change from rhetoric to results. The women of the GAF have spoken. Now, the institution must listen and act.



## CHAPTER SEVEN (7)

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.0 Introduction

This final chapter synthesizes the key findings of the study on the development and perpetuation of gender roles within the GAF and draws overarching conclusions. The study also provides a set of comprehensive policy recommendations aimed at fostering gender equality and inclusivity within the GAF, informed by the empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks discussed in preceding chapters.

This study delved into various facets of gender dynamics within the GAF, exploring the intersection of institutional practices, leadership dynamics, and individual experiences. The analysis has revealed the pervasive influence of traditional gender norms on organizational culture, career opportunities, and perceptions of gender roles among service members. Additionally, the study examined the role of official pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses in reinforcing these gender norms, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to promote cultural change and inclusivity.

Building upon the insights gleaned from qualitative data analysis and existing literature, the study offers valuable implications for policy and practice within the GAF. By addressing systemic barriers, promoting gender-sensitive policies, and enhancing institutional accountability, the GAF can create a more equitable work environment that maximizes the potential of all personnel. In the sections that follow, the study provides a summary of the findings, presents the conclusions regarding the development and

perpetuation of gender roles within the GAF, and offer a set of actionable recommendations for fostering gender equality and inclusivity. Through these efforts, the study aims to contribute to the advancement of gender equity within military organizations and promote a culture of respect, diversity, and professionalism within the GAF.

This final chapter synthesizes the core insights from a phenomenological investigation into the lived experiences of female personnel in the GAF. Drawing on in-depth interviews with 24 participants (14 women and 10 men) and grounded in the dual-theoretical framework of Psychopolitics of Consciousness and Social Constructivism, the chapter presents a concise summary of key findings, offers logically derived conclusions, and proposes actionable, evidence-based recommendations. Critically, this study moves beyond policy rhetoric to center the voices, struggles, and strategies of women navigating a male-dominated institution. The analysis confirms that while no official barriers prevent women's enlistment since 1979, de facto inequalities persist in promotion, infrastructure, culture, and daily interactions. The chapter concludes with concrete steps the GAF can take to transform symbolic commitments into systemic equity.

## **7.1 Summary of Findings**

### **7.1.1 The Impact of Gendered Expectations on Military Leadership Within the GAF**

The analysis of GAF pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses reveals significant insights into the impact of gendered expectations on military leadership within the GAF. The prevailing perception of the GAF as a male-dominated institution, synonymous with discipline, underscores entrenched gender imbalances. This perception, echoed by both female and male participants, highlights the influence of gender norms on leadership dynamics within the military. Official pronouncements within the GAF often

reinforce this perception, contributing to the marginalization of women within the institution. Despite initiatives aimed at promoting gender diversity and inclusion, the institutional framework continues to perpetuate traditional gender norms, positioning men as the normative standard within the military context. Insights from existing literature and theories, such as Enloe's (2000) concept of militarized masculinity and the theory of Psychopolitics, further elucidate the mechanisms through which gender roles are constructed and sustained within the military context. These discourses influence the consciousness of military personnel, shaping their understanding of gender roles and expectations within the Armed Forces.

Moreover, studies on gender disparities in military recruitment and training offer parallels to the structural advantages afforded to male counterparts within the GAF. Implicit biases embedded in training materials and leadership communications contribute to the perpetuation of traditional gender norms, reinforcing existing power structures and social hierarchies. The experiences of female military personnel within the GAF illustrate the impact of institutional practices on individual consciousness, contributing to feelings of marginalization and exclusion. Female military personnel encounter scepticism, derogatory comments, and discriminatory treatment based on gender, which can shape their sense of identity and belonging within the military community. In contrast, male military personnel exhibit a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics within the GAF, acknowledging gender biases while downplaying the extent of discrimination. This perception disparity may be attributed to differential access to power and privilege within the military hierarchy, influenced by socialization processes.

Overall, the findings underscore the complexity of gender dynamics within the GAF and highlight the need for targeted interventions to promote gender equity and inclusivity in

military leadership. Context-specific strategies, tailored to address gender inequalities, are essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment within the GAF.

### **7.1.2 Gender Socialization in the GAF: Exploring the Influence of Recruitment Practices, Boot Camp Experiences, and Everyday Interactions**

#### **a) Recruitment Practices:**

The study scrutinized the recruitment practices within the GAF, unearthing a clear pattern emerges: systemic biases are deeply ingrained, favoring male candidates over their female counterparts. This perpetuates a cycle of gender disparities within the Armed Forces. Insights gleaned from studies by MacKenzie (2015) and Stevens et al., (2021) offer valuable context here. MacKenzie's (2015) research underscores how these biases manifest in subtle yet impactful ways, ultimately shaping the composition of the military. Stevens et al., (2021) work further illuminates the structural advantages that men enjoy in recruitment processes, highlighting the uphill battle women face from the outset.

#### **b) Boot Camp Experiences:**

Transitioning into boot camp, female recruits and cadets often find themselves navigating environments overwhelmingly dominated by men. Stevens et al., (2021) research provides a poignant look into the challenges they encounter during this crucial phase of training. These challenges go beyond physical rigors; they extend into the realm of social dynamics, where gender stereotypes and biases are palpably present. Here, the implicit biases embedded in training materials serve to reinforce traditional gender norms, further shaping the experiences of recruits and cadets as they acclimate to military life.

#### **c) Everyday Interactions:**

Beyond boot camp, everyday interactions within the GAF reflect and perpetuate gender stereotypes. Female military personnel, in particular, are confronted with skepticism, derogatory comments, and discriminatory treatment based solely on their gender. These experiences, deeply ingrained in the fabric of military culture, contribute to the internalization of gendered expectations among service members. Such experiences not only shape individual identities but also influence one's sense of belonging within the military community.

In summary, the exploration of gender socialization within the GAF reveals a complex interplay of factors. From recruitment practices to boot camp experiences and everyday interactions, gender disparities persist, perpetuating traditional norms and hindering efforts toward inclusivity. Recognizing these challenges is the first step toward implementing targeted interventions aimed at promoting gender equity and fostering a more supportive environment for all service members.

### **7.1.3 Navigating Gendered Expectations: Perspectives and Experiences of Female Military Personnel in the GAF**

The experiences of female military personnel within the GAF intimates, it is impossible to overlook the stark gender imbalance entrenched within the military's fabric. The prevailing perception of the GAF as a male-dominated bastion echoes loudly, resonating through both official pronouncements and the lived experiences of service members. This prevailing sentiment not only shapes institutional culture but also perpetuates the marginalization of women within the Armed Forces.

Moreover, the impact of such institutional dynamics reverberates deeply within the individual consciousness of female military personnel. The hurdles they face - skepticism, derogatory comments, and discriminatory treatment - are not merely professional

challenges but deeply personal ones, affecting their sense of belonging and identity within the military community. This internalization of gendered expectations among female military personnel speaks volumes about the power of institutional norms to shape individual perceptions. These experiences, as the study uncovered, reinforce feelings of exclusion and marginalization, painting a sobering picture of the uphill battle women face in navigating military spaces.

Furthermore, the exploration of women in military leadership sheds light on the persistent barriers and biases encountered by female military personnel striving to ascend the ranks. Skepticism regarding their leadership prowess and the struggle to dismantle entrenched gender stereotypes present formidable challenges, hindering the realization of their full potential within the hierarchical structures of the GAF. Interestingly, the discussions also unveiled a disparity in perceptions between male and female military personnel. While male counterparts acknowledge the existence of gender biases, they tend to downplay the extent of gender-based discrimination. This nuanced understanding may stem from differential access to power and privilege within the military hierarchy, underscored by the influence of socialization processes.

In essence, the examination of the experiences and perspectives of female military personnel within the GAF underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions. Strategies aimed at challenging institutional norms, providing robust support systems for female military personnel, and implementing gender-sensitive policies are imperative to foster a more equitable and inclusive environment within the GAF.

#### **7.1.4 Challenging Gender Norms and Redefining Professional Identities: The Agency of Female Military personnel in the GAF**

In exploring the experiences of female personnel within the GAF, it becomes evident that they wield significant agency in reshaping gender norms and professional identities within the military context. One notable aspect is their assertion of leadership roles despite prevailing gender biases. Despite encountering skepticism and facing derogatory remarks, female military personnel consistently demonstrate their leadership competencies. By doing so, they challenge the entrenched perception that military leadership is primarily a male domain. Their presence and effectiveness in leadership positions serve as compelling examples of gender inclusivity and competence within the GAF.

Moreover, female military personnel actively engage in advocacy efforts aimed at promoting gender equity and inclusivity within the Armed Forces. Through initiatives such as the establishment of gender desks and the implementation of gender-sensitive training programs, they strive to address systemic inequalities and create a more supportive environment for women in the military. Their advocacy extends beyond mere rhetoric, as they actively work towards tangible changes in institutional practices and policies. In the face of gender-based discrimination and marginalization, female military personnel exhibit resilience and resistance. They assert their right to equal treatment and opportunities within the military, challenging stereotypes and biases through their actions and behaviors. Their refusal to conform to traditional gender roles not only empowers them individually but also contributes to the gradual dismantling of discriminatory practices within the GAF.

Furthermore, female military personnel serve as invaluable role models and mentors for younger generations of servicewomen. Through their guidance and support, they inspire and empower others to pursue military careers and navigate the challenges inherent in a

male-dominated environment. Their mentorship fosters a sense of camaraderie and solidarity among female personnel, creating a supportive network for professional development within the Armed Forces.

In summary, the agency of female military personnel within the GAF is instrumental in driving the transformation of gender norms and professional identities within the military. Through their leadership, advocacy, resilience, and mentorship, they challenge existing barriers and contribute to the cultivation of a more inclusive and diverse organizational culture within the Armed Forces.

#### **7.1.5 Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Examining Gendered Power Dynamics and Career Advancement for Female Military personnel in the GAF.**

The GAF exhibit entrenched gender imbalances, with a prevailing perception of being a male-dominated institution synonymous with discipline. Despite efforts towards gender diversity and inclusion, official pronouncements and institutional practices often reinforce traditional gender norms, marginalizing women within the military. Female military personnel encounter skepticism, derogatory comments, and discriminatory treatment based on gender, contributing to feelings of marginalization and exclusion. These experiences reflect broader patterns observed in military institutions worldwide, highlighting persistent barriers and biases faced by women in military leadership positions.

Insights from studies on gender disparities in military recruitment and training reveal systemic biases that favor male counterparts, perpetuating inequalities in career progression and roles within the Armed Forces. Implicit biases embedded in training materials and leadership communications further contribute to the perpetuation of traditional gender norms, reinforcing existing power structures and social hierarchies. While male military personnel demonstrate a nuanced understanding of gender dynamics

within the GAF, acknowledging the existence of gender biases, they often downplay the extent of gender-based discrimination. This perception disparity may be attributed to differential access to power and privilege within the military hierarchy, influenced by socialization processes. The absence of gender-sensitive policies within the GAF underscores the need for context-specific interventions tailored to address gender inequalities. Comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategies are essential to promote gender equity and inclusivity within the GAF, as emphasized by scholars like MacKenzie (2015) and Kronsell (2012). In summary, breaking the glass ceiling for female military personnel in the GAF requires challenging entrenched gender norms, addressing systemic biases, and implementing context-specific interventions to create a more inclusive and equitable military environment.

#### **7.1.6 Fostering Gender Equality and Inclusivity: Strategies and Interventions for a More Equitable Working Environment in the GAF**

The GAF revealed entrenched patterns of gender inequality, perpetuated through official pronouncements, training manuals, and leadership discourses. Despite efforts to promote gender diversity and inclusion, such as the establishment of gender desks and training programs on gender sensitivity, the GAF continues to uphold traditional gender norms, positioning men as the normative standard within the institution. This is reflected in the prevailing perception of the GAF as a male-dominated institution synonymous with discipline, which marginalizes women and reinforces existing power dynamics. Insights from existing literature and theories, including Enloe's (2000) concept of militarized masculinity and the theory of psychopolitics, shed light on the mechanisms through which gender roles are constructed and sustained within military contexts. Studies by MacKenzie (2015) and Stevens et al., (2021) further highlight systemic biases favoring male counterparts in recruitment, training, and career progression, contributing to gender

disparities within the GAF. The experiences of female military personnel underscore the impact of institutional practices on individual consciousness, leading to feelings of marginalization and exclusion. Despite efforts towards gender integration in military leadership, persistent barriers and biases hinder the advancement of female military personnel within hierarchical structures.

Male military personnel exhibit a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics within the GAF, acknowledging the existence of gender biases while downplaying the extent of discrimination. This perception disparity may stem from differential access to power and privilege within the military hierarchy, influenced by socialization processes. In light of these findings, fostering gender equality and inclusivity in the GAF requires targeted interventions tailored to address gender inequalities. Context-specific strategies, such as comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategies advocated by scholars like MacKenzie (2015) and Kronsell (2012), are essential for creating a more equitable work environment within the GAF. These interventions should aim to challenge traditional gender norms, mitigate systemic biases, and promote equal opportunities for all service members, thereby fostering a more inclusive and diverse military culture.

In summary, gender roles in the GAF are perpetuated through institutional discourse. GAF pronouncements, defined as official speeches, policy statements, and media releases by GAF leadership, particularly CDS addresses at Armed Forces Day, consistently valorize militarized masculinity. As F07 stated: *“When the CDS speaks, he talks about ‘our brave soldiers’ but never ‘our brave female soldiers.’* This erasure, reinforced through training manuals and leadership narratives, constructs leadership as inherently male. Female Commanding Officers face skepticism about their authority, with one participant

recounting: *“imagine a pregnant CO having to breastfeed in the office.”* Such remarks reveal how femininity is coded as incompatible with command.

Second, recruitment, boot camp, and everyday interactions shape gendered consciousness from the outset. Boot camp, the 6-9 months initial training at Ghana Military Academy is a critical site of socialization where women are isolated (e.g., “120 recruits, only 8 women”) and their competence questioned. Recruitment criteria favours male physiology, and daily interactions reinforce a zero-sum view of gender inclusion: “They ask, *‘Why was the opportunity given to a woman?’* Male participants confirmed this but often downplayed its systemic nature, framing challenges as matters of individual resilience rather than institutional bias.

Third, women navigate profound tensions between societal expectations of femininity and military demands. As F10 noted: *“Women are supposed to get married, have kids... but in the military, you must prove you’re tougher than men.”* This duality creates internal conflict and emotional strain, exacerbated by work-family pressures: *“It is very difficult to achieve alongside your work schedules.”*

Fourth, women exercise strategic agency despite structural constraints. They assert competence through performance (“Physical activity is what sets women apart”), build support networks, and advocate for reform through initiatives like the Elsie Initiative. Yet, as F01 lamented: *“My male counterpart got promoted. They said, ‘You might get pregnant soon.’* Individual effort alone cannot dismantle the brass ceiling only three female Brigadier Generals exist in GAF history.

Fifth, a stark policy-practice gap persists. While the GAF projects a “professional military” image, underlying gender norms marginalize women. Promotions, assignments, and

leadership pipelines remain male-dominated. As F12 observed: “*Women travel for peacekeeping... only to return to their husbands’ infidelity.*” These sacrifices go unrecognized, and systemic barriers remain unaddressed.

The twenty-four participants proposed concrete, consensus-driven reforms. Both women and men called for mandatory gender-sensitivity training, functional Gender Desks at all garrison levels, gender-audited physical standards, transparent promotion criteria, formal mentorship programs, and annual culture audits.

## 7.2 Conclusion

In culmination, the exploration into the gender dynamics within the GAF has illuminated significant insights into the complexities and challenges inherent in achieving gender equality and inclusivity within military institutions. Through a multifaceted analysis encompassing historical context, institutional frameworks, personal experiences, leadership dynamics, cultural influences, and intervention strategies, we have unraveled the intricate tapestry of gender roles and inequalities shaping the GAF's organizational culture.

The findings underscore the entrenched nature of gender imbalances within the GAF, as evidenced by the prevailing perception of the institution as male-dominated and the systemic marginalization experienced by female service members. Despite efforts to promote gender diversity and inclusion through policy measures and training initiatives, gaps in implementation persist, perpetuating traditional gender norms and hindering progress towards equality.

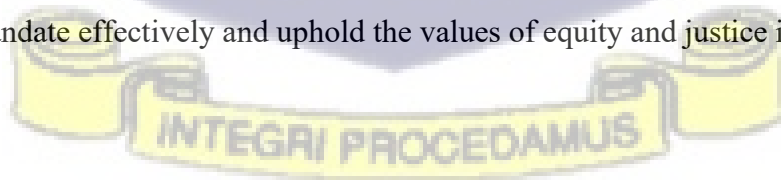
Moreover, the examination of leadership dynamics within the GAF reveals both the potential for transformative leadership to mitigate gender biases and the persistence of

hierarchical structures that reinforce gender stereotypes. Female military personnel encounter skepticism, derogatory comments, and discriminatory treatment, reflecting broader societal attitudes towards women in positions of authority.

The interplay between gender roles and military culture further complicates efforts to foster inclusivity, with traditional notions of masculinity and femininity shaping expectations and opportunities for service members. These gendered expectations are perpetuated through institutional practices, official pronouncements, and training materials, contributing to the reproduction of gender hierarchies within the GAF.

However, amidst these challenges, the study also highlights promising strategies and interventions for promoting gender equality and inclusivity within the GAF. Context-specific approaches, tailored to address the unique experiences and needs of female service members, offer avenues for policy reform, leadership development, and cultural transformation. By challenging stereotypes, promoting equal opportunities, and creating a more inclusive military culture, the GAF can harness the full potential of all its service members, irrespective of gender.

In essence, the study calls for a holistic and proactive approach to gender equality within the GAF, grounded in principles of fairness, respect, and dignity for all. Only through concerted efforts to address systemic inequalities and dismantle gender norms can the GAF realize its mandate effectively and uphold the values of equity and justice in service to the nation.



This study leads to several logical inferences about gender, power, and institutional culture in the GAF. First, no official barriers prevent women's enlistment, yet, de facto inequalities persist in promotion, infrastructure, and culture. Second, individual agency,

while evident, is insufficient to dismantle systemic barriers; structural reform is essential. Third, the GAF's gender inequality is not accidental but institutionally reproduced through pronouncements, training, and everyday interactions that normalize militarized masculinity. Fourth, current policies (e.g., Gender Desks, Elsie Initiative) remain tokenistic due to under-resourcing and weak enforcement. Fifth, the phenomenological gap in Ghanaian scholarship has been filled: this study centers the lived, embodied experiences of servicewomen, moving beyond policy analysis to reveal how gender is navigated, resisted, and redefined. Collectively, these insights confirm that the GAF is exclusionary not by law but by practice.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

Gender equality and inclusivity are fundamental principles that contribute to the effectiveness, morale, and cohesion of military institutions. Recognizing the importance of these principles, the GAF must undertake proactive measures to address gender disparities, promote diversity, and create a more equitable working environment. This section outlines a comprehensive set of policy recommendations aimed at fostering gender equality and inclusivity within the GAF, drawing upon insights from existing literature, best practices from other Armed Forces, and the findings of this study.

#### **7.3.1 Implement Comprehensive Gender Sensitivity Training:**

Gender sensitivity training programs play a crucial role in raising awareness, challenging biases, and promoting cultural change within organizations. To this end, the GAF should develop and implement mandatory gender sensitivity training programs for all personnel. These programs should be tailored to address the unique challenges and dynamics of military service, including combat roles, operational environments, and hierarchical structures. Key components of the training should include:

- a) Understanding Gender Dynamics: Provide education on the social construction of gender, gender stereotypes, and their impact on organizational culture and individual behavior.
- b) Combatting Unconscious Bias: Equip personnel with strategies to recognize and challenge unconscious biases in recruitment, promotion, and decision-making processes.
- c) Promoting Inclusive Leadership: Offer leadership training modules focused on fostering inclusive leadership practices, communication strategies, and conflict resolution skills.
- d) Addressing Gender-Based Violence: Provide guidance on preventing and responding to gender-based violence within the military, including reporting mechanisms, victim support services, and disciplinary procedures.

To transform the GAF into a truly inclusive institution, the following evidence-based strategies should be implemented:

- 1. Implement Comprehensive Gender Sensitivity Training**

Mandatory training for all ranks should address unconscious bias, gender-based violence, and inclusive leadership moving beyond awareness to behavioural change.

- 2. Strengthen Enforcement of Gender-Sensitive Policies.**

Clear protocols, anonymous reporting channels, and disciplinary measures must be institutionalized to hold violators accountable.

- 3. Establish Functional Gender Desks at All Levels**

Gender Desks must be staffed, funded, and empowered to investigate complaints, advocate for reform, and coordinate with HR and legal units.

4. Promote Women’s Leadership and Participation.
5. Targeted recruitment, formal mentorship, and transparent, merit-based promotion criteria are essential to accelerate women’s advancement.
6. Develop Gender-Responsive Operational Protocols.
7. Integrate gender impact assessments into mission planning, ensure gender-balanced deployments, and provide female-specific infrastructure in operational settings.
8. Enhance Data Collection and Analysis.
9. Systematically collect and publish gender-disaggregated data on recruitment, retention, promotion, and deployment to inform evidence-based policy.

### **7.3.2 Strengthen Enforcement of Gender-Sensitive Policies:**

While the GAF may have existing gender-sensitive policies in place, their effectiveness hinges on robust enforcement mechanisms. To ensure compliance and accountability, the GAF should take the following steps:

- a) **Establish Clear Protocols:** Clearly articulate expectations regarding behavior, conduct, and treatment of personnel in relation to gender equality and inclusivity through official policies and regulations.
- b) **Enhance Monitoring and Reporting:** Implement regular monitoring mechanisms to track incidents of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and misconduct, with designated reporting channels for victims or witnesses to safely report violations.
- c) **Enforce Disciplinary Measures:** Institute disciplinary measures for offenders found to have violated gender-sensitive policies, including sanctions, remedial actions, and professional development interventions.

### **7.3.3. Establish Gender Desks at all Levels:**

Gender desks serve as specialized units within military organizations tasked with addressing gender-related issues, providing support services, and promoting gender mainstreaming initiatives. To enhance their effectiveness within the GAF, the following steps should be taken:

- a) **Expand Scope and Capacity:** Increase the number of gender desks across all branches and units of the GAF, ensuring geographic coverage and accessibility to personnel at all levels.
- b) **Provide Specialized Training:** Equip gender desk military personnel with specialized training in gender analysis, conflict resolution, victim support, and advocacy, enabling them to effectively address a wide range of gender-related concerns.
- c) **Facilitate Coordination:** Foster collaboration between gender desks, human resources departments, legal units, and external stakeholders to streamline efforts, share best practices, and leverage resources for maximum impact.

### **7.3.4 Promote Women's Leadership and Participation:**

Increasing the representation of women in leadership positions within the GAF is essential for fostering diversity, role modeling, and ensuring that the institution reflects the demographic composition of society. To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- a) **Targeted Recruitment Initiatives:** Develop targeted recruitment campaigns aimed at attracting women to various branches and specialties within the GAF, highlighting opportunities for career advancement, professional development, and leadership roles.

- b) Mentorship and Networking Programs: Establish mentorship programs pairing junior female personnel with senior leaders to provide guidance, support, and career advice, fostering a pipeline of future leaders.
- c) Transparent Promotion Criteria: Implement transparent promotion criteria and performance evaluation systems that prioritize meritocracy, competency, and leadership potential, mitigating biases and barriers to advancement.

### **7.3.5. Develop Gender-Responsive Operational Protocols:**

Integrating gender perspectives into operational protocols is essential for ensuring that military missions, activities, and decision-making processes account for the diverse needs, experiences, and capabilities of personnel. The following measures should be considered:

- a) Gender Impact Assessments: Conduct gender impact assessments as part of mission planning, operational readiness, and deployment processes to identify and address potential gender-specific risks, vulnerabilities, and opportunities.
- b) Gender-Responsive Training: Integrate gender-responsive training modules into pre-deployment training programs, focusing on gender-sensitive communication, cultural awareness, and engagement strategies to enhance mission effectiveness and community relations.
- c) Gender-Responsive Deployment: Ensure gender-balanced deployment teams and units, considering the unique requirements of female personnel, including access to appropriate facilities, equipment, and support services in operational environments.
- d) Enhance Data Collection and Analysis: Data-driven decision-making is critical for monitoring progress, identifying gaps, and evaluating the impact of gender equality

initiatives within the GAF. To strengthen data collection and analysis capabilities, the following actions should be taken:

- a) **Gender-Disaggregated Data:** Collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data on recruitment, retention, career progression, deployment, and operational performance to identify trends, disparities, and areas for targeted intervention.
- b) **Performance Metrics:** Develop performance metrics and indicators related to gender equality and inclusivity, incorporating them into regular reporting mechanisms, performance evaluations, and strategic planning processes.
- c) **Research and Evaluation:** Invest in research studies, evaluations, and surveys to assess the effectiveness of gender equality interventions, understand the lived experiences of personnel, and inform evidence-based policy formulation and implementation.

#### 7.4 Further Study

**Explore Intersectional Experiences:** Investigate the intersectionality of gender with other identity markers such as ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic status, to understand how multiple dimensions of identity shape experiences within the GAF and inform targeted interventions. Future research should:

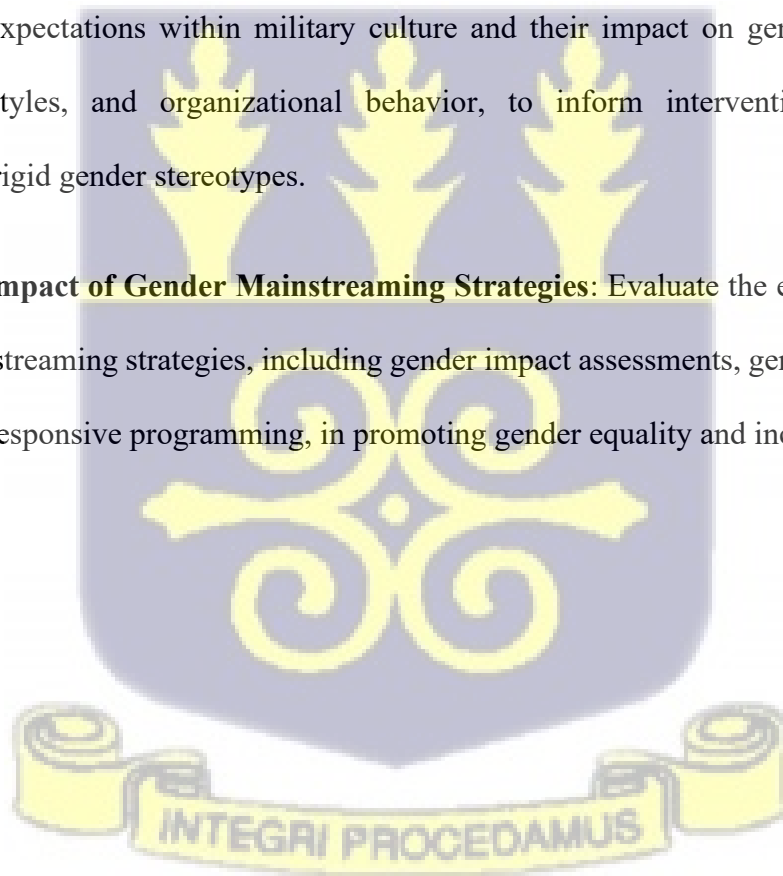
**Assess Longitudinal Impact of Gender Policies:** Conduct longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of gender-sensitive policies and interventions on organizational culture, gender dynamics, and the career trajectories of women within the GAF.

**Examine External Stakeholder Perspectives:** Explore the perspectives of external stakeholders, including civilian communities, government agencies, and international partners, on gender-related issues within the GAF, to identify opportunities for collaboration and advocacy.

**Investigate Best Practices in Other Armed Forces:** Conduct comparative studies with other Armed Forces in the region or globally to identify best practices in promoting gender equality, inclusivity, and diversity, and assess their applicability within the context of the GAF

**Study the Role of Masculinity in Military Culture:** Examine the role of masculinity norms and expectations within military culture and their impact on gender dynamics, leadership styles, and organizational behavior, to inform interventions aimed at challenging rigid gender stereotypes.

**Assess the Impact of Gender Mainstreaming Strategies:** Evaluate the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming strategies, including gender impact assessments, gender budgeting, and gender-responsive programming, in promoting gender equality and inclusivity within the GAF.



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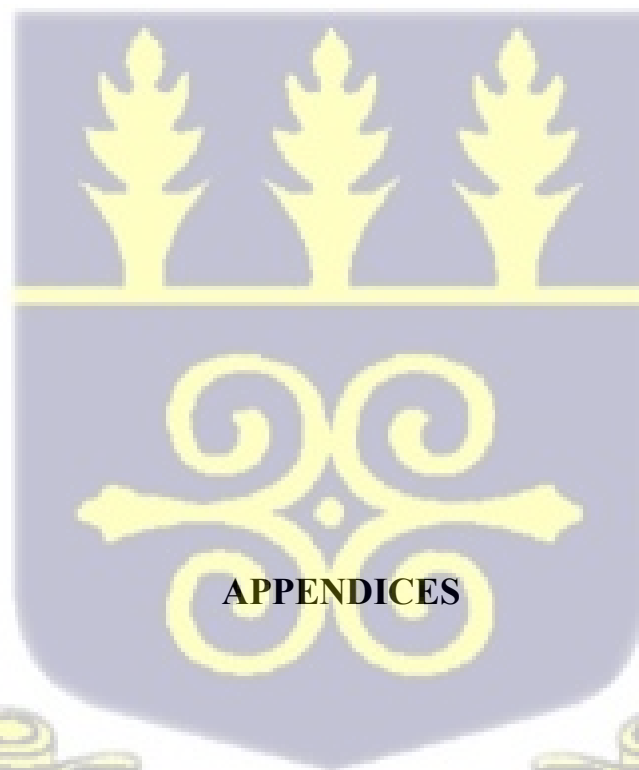
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### Aide-Mémoire

1. Reflection on your professional experiences in the Ghana Armed Forces.
  - i. Perception of institutional make up or culture of the Ghana Armed Forces.
  - ii. Career advancements, retrogression.

- iii. Institutional or personal support or constraints.
  - iv. Strategies to deal with i and ii above.
  - v. Relationships between men and women in respect of i above.
2. Reflection on your personal experiences in the Ghana Armed Forces.
- i. Informal support or undermining systems.
  - ii. Coping strategies.
  - iii. Emotional states and management strategies.
  - iv. Relationships between men and women and women and women in respect of i to iii above.
3. Life outside of the Ghana Armed Forces.

- i. Structure.
  - ii. Complementary or contradictory in respect of 1 and 2 above.
  - iii. If complimentary, what is “complimentary” and how is it structured or worked out.
  - iv. If contradictory what is “contradictory” it and how is it resolved.
  - v. If balanced, what is “balanced” and how is it achieved?
4. Freewheeling reflections.

**Objective 3: Understanding how women in the Ghana Armed Forces act and make choices.**

1. Ways you make decisions and take actions to advance your career in the Ghana Armed Forces.
2. Examples of strategies you have used to overcome gender-related challenges or biases.

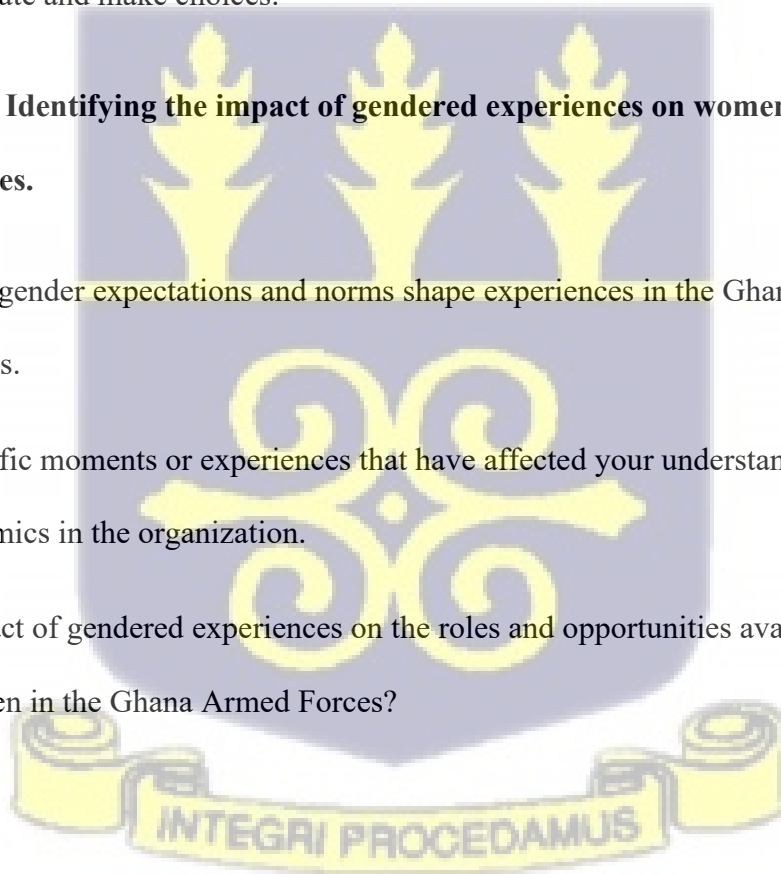
3. How these strategies affect your career growth and decision-making in the Ghana Armed Forces.

**Objective 4: Examining how the strategies used by women influence their ability to navigate the Ghana Armed Forces.**

1. Adapted strategies that affect ability to navigate and make choices in the Ghana Armed Forces.
2. Obstacles in adopting these strategies.
3. Support or barriers provided by the organization when it comes to your ability to navigate and make choices.

**Objective 5: Identifying the impact of gendered experiences on women in the Ghana Armed Forces.**

1. How gender expectations and norms shape experiences in the Ghana Armed Forces.
2. Specific moments or experiences that have affected your understand gender dynamics in the organization.
3. Impact of gendered experiences on the roles and opportunities available to women in the Ghana Armed Forces?





**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES (ECH)

*P. O. Box LG 74, Legon, Accra, Ghana*

*My Ref. No.: ECH.289/22-23*

September 7, 2023

Elsie Pokuaa Manu  
Department of Political Science  
University of Ghana  
Legon

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE**  
**(ECH 289/ 22-23)**

The Ethics Committee for the Humanities (ECH) conducted an expedited review and approved your protocol titled:

**THE POLITICAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF GENDER ROLES IN SECURITY AGENCIES:  
THE GHANA ARMED FORCES IN PERSPECTIVE**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: ELSIE POKUAA MANU**

Please note that the final review report must be submitted to the Committee at the completion of the study. Your research records may be audited at any time during or after the implementation. Any modification of this research project must be submitted to ECH for review and approval prior to implementation.

Please report all serious adverse events related to this study to ECH within seven (7) days verbally and in writing within fourteen (14) days.

This certificate is valid until September 6, 2024. You are required to submit annual reports for continuing review.

Please accept my congratulations.

Yours Sincerely,

**Professor C. Charles Mate-Kole**  
**ECH Chair**

Cc: Prof. Abeeke Essuman, Department of Political Science, UG  
Dr. Maame Gyeke-Jandoh, Department of Political Science, UG  
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