

Original Research Article

Between Reform and Reality: Challenges Facing the National Police Service in Implementing Police Restructuring in Nairobi County, Kenya

Amos Ochieng' Awitti

National Police College-Embakasi A Campus, Kenya

Correspondence should be addressed to: amosawitti1977@gmail.com

Article No: 038 | **Accepted:** 05 August 2026 | **Published:** 10 August 2026

Abstract: Globally, police organizations are facing multiple challenges linked to their complex operating environment. Anchoring on this, police organizations are reviewing their organizational structures and re-engineering them to meet the needs of their customers. This study sought to evaluate the efficacy of police restructuring on the delivery of policing services in Nairobi City County. More specifically, the study sought to determine the challenges facing NPS in the implementation of police restructuring in Nairobi County. The New Public Management theory underpins the study. It carried out an empirical literature review using books, journal articles, periodicals, conference papers, government publications, and publications of renowned intergovernmental bodies. With a target population drawn from the National Crime Research Centre, Independent Policing Oversight Authority, Civil Rights Bodies, particularly Katiba Institute and Independent Medico- Legal Unit, National Government Administrative Officers and police officers drawn from the constitutive services and a directorate of the National Police Service, the study drew a sample of 109 participants. Additionally, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. Primary data was collected using questionnaires, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Secondary data was acquired from books, journal publications, and government publications. The primary data collected was cleaned, edited, coded, and analyzed using SPSS version 9 and NVIVO software for qualitative data analysis. The results of data analysis were presented in the form of frequency tables, graphs, and charts. The study's findings revealed that politicization, corruption, inadequate funding, and poor implementation frameworks were among the main challenges to the restructuring process. The study recommended ongoing officer sensitization, fortifying legal and policy frameworks, and depoliticizing future processes. The study recommends that the government establish ongoing sensitization programs for the purpose of creating awareness on restructuring objectives and expected outcomes.

Keywords: Police Restructuring, Service Delivery, Policing Services

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Globally, police organizations are being faced with challenges in their increasingly complex environment. Consequently, these organizations are obligated to review and adapt their organizational structure to address these challenges and meet the needs of the communities they serve (van Graan & Ukpere, 2015). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2013) notes that policing continues to evolve in response to new knowledge, technology, demographic change, diversifying societal demands, and urbanization. Structure is the lifeline of every organization that is interested in survival. An organization's structure is the way the pieces of the organization fit together internally, which also covers the links with the external environment, such as partners and stakeholders. For an organization to deliver on its mandate, its strategy and structure must be woven seamlessly (Ogbo, Obi-Anike, Agbaeze, and Ukpere, 2014; Fleming, 2017; Katarzyna, 2017). Heugens and Scheneck (2004) view restructuring strategy as the eradication of business processes that are not performing and replacing them with new and more efficient processes. The explanations for the restructuring of policing involve shortcomings of the public service delivery, an increase in crime, the nature of economic systems, the character of government, and the social structure, ideas, and culture.

In the 2013 review of policing in England and Wales, police restructuring adopted three options: legally negotiated mergers, coordinated amalgamation to create 10 regional forces, and a national police service for England and Wales (Independent Police Commission, 2013). An evaluation of police restructuring in England and Wales reveals that the "progressive reorganization of Britain's police into larger units has merely fueled public dissatisfaction" (Loveday & Reid, 2016).

The efforts to undertake police reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina were an internationally led process. The process was initiated by the United Nations with the assistance of the European Union. The reform process was geared towards the transformation of the police system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The police system here was considered fragmented, and therefore the restructuring process was to transform the system into a depoliticized system (Thomas, 2008). According to the EU (2005), the process was sealed through signing of an agreement called the Association and Stabilization Agreement. The overall goal of the restructuring process was to achieve a more efficient police service which is financially sustainable. It was generally agreed that the reform process would proceed through a consensus. Thomas (2008) observes that this process became difficult because of two key issues: it had to achieve a delicate ethno-political power sharing deal in a post-conflict environment. Additionally, the deficiencies of the international community which included divergent opinions also derailed the process. A further voice added by Marijan and Guzina reasons that Bosnia and Herzegovina were not ripe for reforms as envisaged in the policing sphere (Marjan & Guzina, 2014).

In Africa, police restructuring has interesting cases presenting different scenarios. The South African Police restructuring process was undertaken in 2006. The overall objective of the process was to streamline the management of SAPS as well as to ensure efficient and effective service delivery (van Graan & Ukpere, 2015). In a broader view, Omar (2007) asserts the restructuring of SAPS was aimed at addressing duplication of functions, weak command and control and poor service delivery at station level. During the process of restructuring of the SAPS, specialized police units such as the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS), the Serious and Violent Crimes Unit (SVC) and Area Crime Combating Units (ACCUS) were absorbed into a decentralized structure. According to a study by van Graan (2008), the decentralization of FCS was shrouded with ambiguity and lack of proper communication. Consequently, the officers at the FCS lost morale and their productivity plummeted. There was low opinion as to the feasibility and sustainability of the process and the expertise and specialized skills of the FCS as a unit was not taken into consideration. In addition, the partnerships that were already established by the FCS literally collapsed and this led to a negative impact on the delivery of policing services. Furthermore, the clientele that were being served by the FCS were also affected. As a consequence, there was a ministerial order by the Minister of Police that FCS resumes its former centralized structure.

In Nigeria, the Nigeria National Police Force (NNPF) was restructured to reduce over centralization of police in the country. Zaidu et al. (2019) argue that centralization of the police made it more susceptible to political control. In putting up a case for the restructuring of the NNPF, Olalekan and Adekunle (2019) posited that “just like every other federal institution, the federal police are not only inefficient but also poorly funded. By devolving security duties of the police to the state and communities, the federal government will be killing two birds with one stone. Through devolution of the present Nigerian Police Force into state and community control, the federal recurrent budget will be drastically reduced and the blame of the federal government for certain crimes will be pushed to states and community governments”.

The restructuring of the National Police Service (NPS) in Kenya was initiated in 2018. The initiative was driven by the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of the National Government and the Inspector General of Police. The overall goal of the NPS restructuring was to enhance the delivery of policing services, facilitate prudent use of resources, and increase police presence at the grassroots (NPS, 2018). The process presented mixed outcomes. A study by Linturi and Muna (2019) concluded that the restructuring process led to confusion in the command structure, instructions issued were slow to reach junior officers who are responsible for their execution, and the delivery of policing services became slow. A contrary view is presented by Wanjiru and Maina (2021). The authors aver that portfolio restructuring enhanced cooperation between different police formations, and the service is more focused and organized after the restructuring. This glaring disagreement between scholars as to the outcomes of the restructuring process calls for the need to conduct a more holistic interrogation of the subject in the Kenyan context.

This study, therefore, seeks to evaluate the efficacy of police restructuring on the delivery of policing services in Nairobi County.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed-methods research approach. This approach integrates qualitative and quantitative data to enable a holistic comprehension of the study topic. The researcher selected this method because it confers a variety of advantages. Due to mixture of both qualitative and quantitative data in one study, the results were more credible. Additionally, the convergence of both qualitative and quantitative data lends more validity to the findings and conclusions of the study. Further, the study benefited from a deeper and more contextualized insight borne out of qualitative data as well as the generalizability of the results from quantitative data. This approach also accorded the researcher flexibility in the design of this study.

2.2 Research Design

Kombo and Tromp (2016) argue that a research design gives a glimpse of how all components of the study will be brought together to address research objectives and answer research questions. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey design. The rationale for the employment of this research design is that it enabled the researcher to collect data and report the situation as it is without manipulating the study's variables. Further, the research design allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative research data, and lastly, it minimized biases.

2.3 Target Population

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) describe the target population as a group of persons in whom the researcher has an interest, and they respond to the research questions. The study's population included the National Crime Research Centre (NCRC), Independent Policing Oversight Authority, Civil Rights Bodies, particularly the Katiba Institute and Independent Medico-Legal Unit, National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs), and police officers drawn from the constabulary services. These participants were drawn from all the Sub-Counties in Nairobi County.

2.4 Sampling Design

A sampling design is a holistic outline to be adopted by a researcher in identifying a sample from a target population. This study adopted purposive sampling to reach to the respondents trusted to be having the requisite information for the study. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to make an in-depth exploration of the research questions with a smaller margin of error. In addition, purposive sampling enabled the researcher to select individuals who have expertise and authority in the subject of police restructuring and therefore will be good sources of information. To carry out proper purposive sampling, the researcher used a mix of extreme case sampling and maximum variation sampling to achieve the best results in terms of samples for the study.

2.5 Sample Size

A Sample size covers entities to be studied and therefore draws from the target population. The sample size of this study was 109 participants drawn from the National Crime Research Centre, Independent Policing Oversight Authority, National Government Administrators, Civil Rights bodies, and police officers from all the constituent services of the NPS to offer a police perspective to the study. Table 1 represents the distribution of samples for the study.

Table 1: Distribution of Samples for the Study

Institution/Entity	Target Respondents	Total
National Police College – Embakasi A Campus	Training Managers	5
National Police College – Embakasi B Campus	Training Managers	5
NPS – Directorate of Training and Reforms	Director Training and Reforms	1
APS – Director of Training and Reforms	Director Training and Reforms	1
Sub-County Police Commanders	Sub-County Police Commanders	17
Ward Police Commanders	Ward Police Commanders and 3 Police Officers	60
National Crime Research Centre	Director and Researchers	5
Independent Policing Oversight Authority	Director and Investigators	5
NGAOs	DCCs	5
Kenya National Commission	Directors/Field Officers	5
TOTAL		109

2.7 Data Collection Methods

The researcher acquired an approval letter from NACOSTI to conduct the study within Nairobi County. After the acquisition of the approval letter from NACOSTI, the researcher sought a letter of approval from the Inspector General of the NPS to interview police officers within Nairobi County. The researcher issued questionnaires and guide respondents on how to fill them. A drop and pick method of administering questionnaires was used. This ensured the researcher saves time on administration of the questionnaires and at the same time provide an opportunity for those not readily available to fill the

questionnaires to participate in the study. The researcher also conducted interviews with officers of the rank of ASP and above in order to get their views on the restructuring process.

2.8 Data Collection Tools

Primary data for this study was acquired through the use of questionnaires and an interview guide. These questionnaires were structured to include both open and closed-ended questionnaires. On the one hand, questionnaires afforded the research flexibility in the acquisition of data as well as save valuable time. On the other hand, interview guides enabled the research verify information and probe responses that are not clear further in order to gain an elaborate perspective of the subject under study. Additionally, focus group discussions (FGDs) were employed to gather data of qualitative nature around the subject of police restructuring. The researcher conducted FGD with participants between 8 and 10 to discuss key issues of the study. The researcher conducted at least two FGDs within Embakasi East Sub-County. The criteria for choosing participants for FGDs was based on the competence and understanding of the police restructuring process. The researcher observed demographic factors such as age, gender, rank and years of service. The FGD sessions were moderated by the researcher while the researcher assistants will be taking notes of the discussions. Secondary data was gathered from books, journal articles, reliable websites, government publications, conference papers and periodicals which were found to be relevant to this study.

2.9 Pre-testing

Hurst et al. (2015) define pretesting as the process of undertaking data collection on a small scale so as to test the reliability and practicability of the data collection tools. The researcher exposed the questionnaire and interview guide to a review and correction by the supervisors and then a representative sample of respondents with similar characteristics to the target population. The essence of conducting a pre-test is to enable the researcher ensure that the right questions included in the research tools. The researcher drew a pilot questionnaire totaling to 10. These pilot questionnaires were administered in Ngong Sub-County in the neighbouring Kajiado County. The Sub-County was used for a pre-test because it is not within Nairobi City County which is the research site but it bears similarities to the research site in terms of having similar characteristics to the target population. The ultimate objective of a pilot study was to check whether the questionnaire will achieve its intended objective.

2.10 Validity and reliability

The researcher ensured validity of the research instrument through formulation and operationalization of questions in tandem with the study variables. This guaranteed that each study variable is exhaustively covered. Furthermore, insights from the supervisors and law enforcement experts were included into the tool. On the other hand, reliability is the achievement of consistent results using the same tool applied in similar sets of

circumstances. Data collection was aligned to the questionnaire and the methods identified for data analysis.

2.11 Data Analysis and Presentation Plan

Kothari (2004) views data analysis as the entire process from data collection to processing, interpretation and drawing of conclusions. Data collected passed through the process of cleaning, editing, coding and entering into requisite formats for a deeper analysis. The researcher used the questionnaires which will be properly filled. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 27 and the results presented in frequency tables, charts and graphs. The study applied regression analysis to analyze quantitative data and bring out the relationship between independent and dependent variables of the study. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze qualitative data. Data will be analyzed thematically using NVIVO software and results presented as descriptive narratives giving details of research findings.

2.12 Ethical Considerations

The researcher was acquired a letter granting permission to carry out the research from NACOSTI. Additionally, other relevant letters such as an introductory letter from the National Intelligence and Research University and a letter authorizing the research to interview police officers from the Inspector General of Police was also acquired by the researcher. The researcher explained to the respondents about the purpose of the study and inform them of their right to voluntary participation as well as seek their informed consent. The researcher ensured that participants are given assurance on the anonymity of their responses and the confidentiality of the information they gave in the process of this study. Further, consent and authorization from identified organizations to participate in the study was sought before commencing data collection.

The researcher ensured the participants in the study of their privacy as well as the confidentiality of any information divulged by them through participation in this study. The participant was also informed that after successful completion of the study, the questionnaires will be destroyed. Finally, the participants were assured that this study was done principally for academic reasons only.

3.0 DISCUSSION

3.1 Challenges Facing the Implementation of the Police Restructuring Process in Nairobi County

From the valid opinion of the officers who participated in the study, the implementation of police restructuring in Kenya faces several significant challenges that undermine its effectiveness. One of the most notable obstacles, as mentioned by respondents, is the lack of proper sensitization and awareness, which has led to gaps in understanding the objectives and processes of restructuring. Without adequate capacity building, officers struggle to adapt to new systems and expectations. One respondent underscored the fact that the process lacked a proper implementation framework. He stated

that *“poor implementation framework – the lack of a clear, phased, and well-communicated roadmap has created confusion, especially at the lower levels.” (Participant 19).*

Financial constraints, inadequate resources, and poor infrastructure also emerge as critical barriers, limiting the ability of the police service to effectively operationalize reforms and activities related to training. Additionally, weaknesses in the implementation framework, leadership, and coordination further compromise the restructuring process; as a result, inefficiencies and inconsistencies persist.

It was also mentioned that social challenges, such as nepotism, favoritism, and perceptions of victimization within different cadres of the service, contribute to divisions and mistrust among officers. Other officers felt that resistance to change, corruption, and lack of clear policies also present serious challenges. Thus, this weakens confidence in the restructuring agenda. Moreover, confusion within the service, coupled with low morale and lack of motivation among officers, has hindered the achievement of desired outcomes. This narrative from one of the key informant interviews adequately captures this case:

The factors you've mentioned are key inhibitors of the restructuring. There have been complaints of discrimination against officers from both divisions in matters of training and deployment, which leads to corruption in most cases. Leadership is the anchor that should see through the process; however, service superiority complexes amongst commanders have affected the smooth running of the NPS. Each Service ranks and files should feel respected enough across the board. (Participant 20)

More qualitative data from FGDs and key informant interviews highlighted a range of challenges undermining implementation, cutting across institutional, structural, and political domains. One of the recurring themes was tied to the structural and command confusion. Both KNCHR and NCRC respondents emphasized that restructuring had not fully achieved command realignment. Officers and stakeholders remain uncertain whether to report to APS or KPS commanders at the county level, leading to inefficiencies. This challenge was also confirmed by SACC, stating that he was *“yet to get the full grip of what the AP Sub-County will be doing as well as the Police Commander.” (Participant 21)*

Persistence of corruption and lack of accountability was another theme that was explored. Rogue officers in the system were repeatedly cited as a challenge. One respondent stated that:

Police corruption has emerged as a serious security challenge in Kenya. Where police corruption is persistent, it represents a systemic failure of governance in which the principal institutions responsible for ensuring police governance, the observance of ethics and integrity standards, and enforcing the rule of law are compromised and may themselves be infested with corrupt individuals and syndicates. (Participant 22)

One participant from a human rights organization went further, stating that accountability was *“even getting worse, (Participant 23),* largely due to the politicization of

security operations and cover-ups when officers acted contrary to the law. These findings echo the results of a study by Kivoi (2013), who asserts that police corruption is a major challenge to the restructuring process in Kenya.

Entrenched rivalry between the constituent services of the National Police Service was also cited as one of the major impediments to the implementation of the restructuring processes. One participant indicated that:

Superiority complex is a major issue; the KPS behaves as if it is superior to APS. Secondly, the APS core mandate as per the restructuring document is "Protective and Border Security," but we have Units in the KPS which are performing APS duties of offering protective security, e.g., Railway Police Unit, Airport Police Unit, CBK, GSU, etc. (Participant 24)

To further emphasize the sibling service rivalry as a challenge to the implementation of police restructuring, another respondent stated that *"The biggest challenge in the implementation of restructuring is the lack of complement between the two services, the love-hate relationship between the 2 services has been a major challenge."* (Participant 25). These findings align with the arguments of Okonya (2021), who found that the two constituent services of the NPS still operate distinctly from each other despite the aspirations of the restructuring process to harmonize security architecture in Kenya.

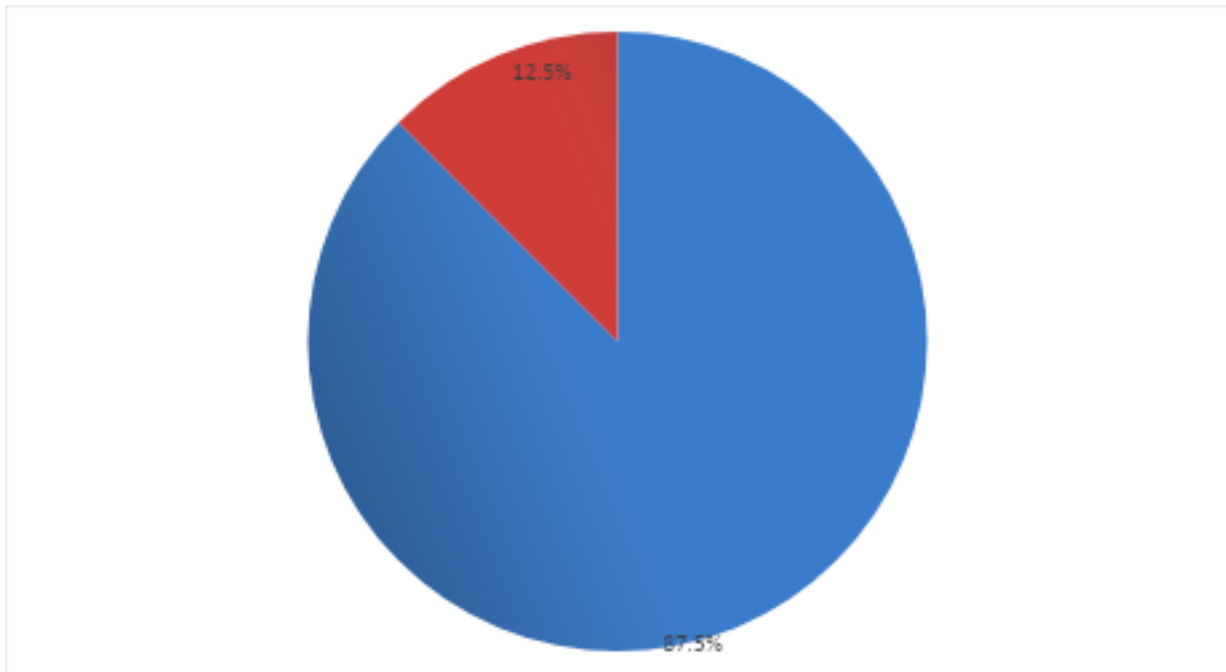
Another challenge mentioned was associated with resource and welfare constraints. Officers cited poor housing, overcrowding, lack of equipment, and welfare neglect as major constraints. APS officers in particular were disadvantaged, lacking adequate housing and often excluded from resource allocations. In one of the FGDs, one participant narrated that *"Officers' welfare ranging from Housing, Low wage compared to the current time, lack of structured in-service training, political interference."* (Participant 25). These conditions demoralized officers and negatively affected their interaction with the public. These results contradict the findings of Mogere (2022), who found that resource allocation has a positive impact on service delivery by the Kenya Police Service officers in Nairobi County. In contrast to these findings, Thurania and Muna (2019) argue that resource allocation to the constituent services of the NPS has not improved post-restructuring period, and this negatively impacts service delivery.

Political interference and lack of goodwill were another key challenge. Both KNCHR and NCRC highlighted political interference as a persistent challenge, affecting the independence of police operations and weakening reform efforts. Lack of political and leadership goodwill was identified as a major obstacle in ensuring dignified working environments for police officers. These results agree with the findings of Muehlmann (2008), who found that the internationally-led police restructuring process in Bosnia-Herzegovina failed due to power-sharing arrangements that were politically instigated. In addition, the results echo the findings of Olalekan and Adenkule (2019), who found that police restructuring in Nigeria was broadly anchored on political concessions. Collectively, these results demonstrate the influence of politics on the results of the police restructuring process.

3.2 Adequate Sensitization of Police Officers in the Restructuring Process and Policies

Figure 8 presents the quantitative data on whether police officers were adequately sensitized to the restructuring process and policies. It is evident from the findings in Figure 1 that only 13 officers (12.5%) reported being adequately sensitized on the restructuring process and its attendant policies, while the overwhelming majority of officers, 91 (87.5%), indicated that they had not been sensitized.

Figure 1: Distribution of whether police officers were adequately sensitized on the restructuring process and policies.



The findings in Figure 1 highlight a serious communication and awareness gap in the implementation of police reforms. The low proportion of sensitized officers suggests that most personnel lacked clarity on the objectives. It is also an indication of a gap tied to procedures and expected outcomes of the restructuring. Such inadequate sensitization is likely to contribute to resistance, low morale, or misinterpretation of the reforms.

Elaboration from the qualitative data in regards to sensitization, it emerged that most police officers felt they were not adequately sensitized on the restructuring process and the attendant policies. Many expressed that the reforms were introduced without prior explanation or detailed communication, leaving them uncertain about the objectives, implications, and expected changes in their roles. One participant felt that *“police officers were not adequately sensitized to the restructuring process and policies because circulars and memos were not always accompanied by interactive sessions, which left room for confusion and misinterpretation.”* (Participant 25). Another participant narrated that:

Many police officers, particularly at the station and post levels, were not adequately sensitized. Communication from top leadership was often limited to circulars or directives without proper training, workshops, or consultative

forums. This led to confusion, misinterpretation of roles, and resistance to change. Officers lacked clarity on what restructuring meant for their daily duties, career progression, or working relationships, which negatively affected implementation. (Participant 24)

Others noted that sensitization efforts, where they occurred, were rushed and not comprehensive. One officer averred that *“the restructuring process was done in haste and there was no input by the affected officers.”* In order to further underscore the lack of adequate sensitization, another officer asserted that *“the process was hurriedly done, the officers in the grassroots were not involved.”*

They also felt these efforts focused mainly on policy announcements rather than practical guidance on implementation. Some officers, the majority of APS, also highlighted that the lack of involvement in decision-making bred feelings of exclusion and resistance, as they felt reforms were imposed rather than collaboratively introduced. This narrative from one of the respondents aptly captures grievances held by AP officers: *“There was not enough sensitization. In fact, the majority of APS members who were merged into KPS are living in denial. Some who were good officers entered into depression and drug abuse.”* (Respondent 10). Additionally, a recurring theme was that insufficient training and a lack of structured awareness programs led to misconceptions, rumors, and low morale within the service, undermining the overall acceptance of the restructuring process.

These findings underscore the importance of anchoring police restructuring processes on sound communication strategies. The results align with the outcomes of several studies that found that for any reform process to succeed, there must be targeted communication. This results in buy-in from police officers likely to be affected by the process (Kawira, 2015; Okonya, 2021; Waweru & Maina, 2019).

3.3 Institutional Constraints Facing the Implementation of the Restructuring Process in Kenya

Statements tied to the institutional constraints facing the implementation of police restructuring in Kenya were also presented to the respondents, as summarized in Table 2. The institutional constraints were explored through the lens of a poor implementation framework, resistance from rank and file, limited resources for effective implementation, a lack of legislative framework anchoring the restructuring process, and political interference in the restructuring process.

Table 2: Distribution of the institutional constraints facing the implementation of police restructuring in Kenya

	SA	A	N	D	SD
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Poor Implementation framework	51(49.0)	42(40.4)	4(3.8)	5(4.8)	2(1.9)

Resistance from the rank and file	32(30.8)	48(46.2)	12(11.5)	11(10.6)	1(1.0)
Limited resources for effective implementation	51(49.0)	37(35.6)	12(11.5)	3(2.9)	1(1.0)
Lack of a legislative framework anchoring restructuring	41(39.4)	37. (35.6)	12 (11.5)	9(8.7)	5(4.8)
Political interference in the restructuring process	47(45.2)	34(32.7)	11(10.6)	9(8.7)	3(2.9)

Note: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, and N=Total number of respondents.

The results, as shown in Table 2, show that a poor implementation framework was a major concern, with an overwhelming majority of the respondents, 93 (89.4%), either strongly agreeing or agreeing that it hindered effective restructuring. Only a small proportion, 4 (3.8%), were neutral, while 7 (6.7%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating that the majority believed weaknesses in the framework significantly affected the process.

Another challenge identified was resistance from the rank and file, where almost three-quarters of the respondents (77.0%) strongly agreed or agreed that resistance posed a barrier. A further 12 (11.5%) were neutral, while 2 (11.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, showing that more than three-quarters acknowledged resistance within the service as a notable challenge.

Regarding limited resources for effective implementation, a larger proportion (84.6%) strongly agreed or agreed, highlighting that financial and logistical inadequacies were critical obstacles. Another 12 (11.5%) were neutral, whereas 3.9% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicated that the majority considered resource constraints a pressing issue.

On the lack of a legislative framework anchoring restructuring, 41 officers (39.4%) strongly agreed, and 37 (35.6%) agreed. However, (13.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. These results suggest that although most respondents believed in the importance of legislative support, a small group viewed restructuring as possible even without it.

Finally, political interference in the restructuring process was also emphasized, with the majority of the officers (77.9%) either strongly agreeing or agreeing that political involvement undermined the initiative. Only 11 (10.6%) were neutral; the rest (12.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. This highlighted political interference as a widely acknowledged obstacle to restructuring.

The study revealed that the restructuring process faced major institutional, political, and resource-related challenges. The most pronounced obstacle was inadequate

sensitization; 87.5% of officers indicated they were not adequately informed about restructuring policies. This lack of communication created uncertainty, confusion, and resistance, especially among APS officers. Qualitative insights confirmed that rushed announcements and exclusion from decision-making worsened resistance at the grassroots.

Resource and welfare constraints were also widely cited, with 84.6% of respondents pointing to poor housing, inadequate equipment, and low welfare allocations as key hindrances. APS officers reported feeling particularly disadvantaged in resource distribution. In addition, 89.4% identified a weak implementation framework as a central obstacle, while 77.9% pointed to political interference undermining reforms. The persistence of corruption was another recurring challenge, with officers noting that restructuring neither curtailed bribery nor collusion with criminals.

These findings are consistent with Anneke (2014), who demonstrated the influence of politics in police operations in South Asia, and Shai (2021), who found similar political interference undermined reforms in Uganda. In Kenya, this study confirms that political patronage, weak leadership, and lack of goodwill continue to compromise restructuring efforts.

Table 3: Summary table of identified challenges and participants' recommendations

Identified Theme	Identified Challenges	Participant Recommendation
Targeted communication on awareness and sensitization of officers about the restructuring process	NPS officers at the station level were not adequately sensitized about the restructuring process. There was limited awareness among National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs)	NPS to conduct continuous sensitization of police officers NPS to develop structured implementation guidelines on police restructuring and make them available to all ranks
Training and Capacity Building	Inadequate or no training at all to support officers in their new mandates. Standardization courses were only offered to a few select officers There was a policy-skill mismatch	Provide continuous professional development courses Harmonize police restructuring with the needs of the operational environment
Implementation gaps	Officers viewed police restructuring as a top-down process The process was brought up hurriedly without a proper implementation framework	Conduct proper stakeholder analysis before restructuring takes place Involve all officers across ranks in the design of the restructuring process

Identified Theme	Identified Challenges	Participant Recommendation
	Lack of adequate resources for implementation	Ensure pre-implementation training of police officers
Corruption/Integrity Issues	Endemic corruption hampers police restructuring outcomes Public trust deficit	Strengthen internal and external oversight mechanisms Develop and implement departmental anti-corruption plans
Political interference	Political interference with the process of restructuring the police impacted its full implementation	Depoliticization of the police restructuring process
Discrimination across services	Resistance from officers who felt discriminated against	Police commanders be trained on how to handle the change process
Police officers' morale	Low morale due to discrimination Hostile working environment Unclear career progression	Improve police welfare and working conditions Ensure fairness in promotions

4.0 Conclusions

The study also concluded that the challenges facing the implementation of police restructuring included politicization of the process, endemic corruption within the service, and lack of adequate resources. The other challenges cited included a lack of adequate training for officers who were redeployed, favoritism, tribalism, and nepotism. These vices negatively impact police officers' morale and consequently lead to poor service delivery.

5.0 Recommendations

For policy, the study recommends the urgent need for reforms to be insulated from political interference, which continues to erode public trust and compromise institutional autonomy. This is buttressed by Table 3 and KII 3, which asserts that, "there is a need for unified command and oversight reforms that have since enhanced accountability with the existing legislative framework. However, there are persistent gaps reported, such as slow response, fuel misuse, politicized police leadership, and the perception that oversight leads to a lack of teeth to bite for police officers." Political goodwill is therefore essential for ensuring that the reform agenda is not only implemented but also sustained. Furthermore, there is a pressing need for legislative frameworks that reinforce operational independence, entrench professionalism, and ensure citizen-centered policing approaches.

The Ministry of Interior and Coordination of the National Government should ensure that adequate funding is directed toward modern equipment, operational tools, training, and improved welfare of officers. This is justified by Participant 25, who said that “officers’ welfare ranging from housing, low wages compared to the current time, lack of structure for in-service training, and political interference.” In order to monitor resource allocation and ensure that funds intended for reform are effectively utilized to drive meaningful change, transparent and accountable structures must be developed.

The Ministry of Interior and Coordination of the National Government and the Office of the Inspector General should ensure that strong legislative frameworks are in place to entrench new policies. This is supported by Participant 19, who asserted that the process was affected by “poor implementation framework-lack of a clear phased and well communicated roadmap has created confusion, especially at lower levels.” The legislative framework will effectively anchor future restructuring processes and ensure that they are enforceable and binding across successive governments. This creates continuity, enhances officers’ confidence in reforms, and ensures that political transitions do not compromise progress made in professionalizing the police.

6.0 Areas for Further Research

Future studies ought to go beyond the study of structural police reforms and instead look more closely at the influence of police leadership on enhancing professionalism in a post-reform setting. There has been little focus on how leadership methods, decision-making styles, and accountability frameworks directly affect the entrenchment of professionalism within restructured police agencies. This is despite the fact that previous studies frequently identified structural or legal alterations. Additionally, future studies should investigate the degree to which police restructuring has significantly changed police-community interactions. More particularly, these studies should look into how restructuring has fostered legitimacy, trust, and cooperative problem-solving.

References

1. Fleming, R. (2017). The effects of organizational restructuring and acceptance of change on employees' motivation (Doctoral Dissertation, Walden University).
2. Heugens, P.P. M.A.R., & Schenk, H. (2004). Rethinking Corporate Restructuring. *Journal of Public Affairs* 4(1), 87-101
3. Hurst, A. (2023). Introduction to qualitative research methods. Corvallis, Oregon. Oregon State University.
4. Katarzyna, S. (2017). Factors Influencing Organizational Culture. *Scientific Papers of Silesian University of Technology. Organization and Management Series* 2017(100), 457-468
5. Kivoi, D.L. & Mbae, C.G. (2013). The Achilles heel of police reforms in Kenya. Science Publishing Group, 2(6), 189-194. <https://doi.org/10.11648/jss.20130206.13>
6. Kombo, D.K. & Tromp, A.D. (2016). *Proposal and thesis writing: An introduction*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications.
7. Kothari, C.R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd Revised Edition). New Delhi: New Age International (P) Limited Publishers.
8. Linturi, T. M. & Muna, M.L.Y. (2021). Command restructuring and performance among police officers in Lamu County, Kenya. *African Journal of Emerging Issues*, (1), 129-148.

9. Loveday, B. (2015). Police management and workforce reform in the period of austerity. In police services: Leadership and management perspectives, 115-127. Cham Springer International Publishing.
10. Marjan, B. & Guzina, D. (2014). The Politics of the “unfinished business”: Bosnian police reform, policy brief. Centre for International Governance Innovation.
11. Mugenda, O. & Mugenda, A. (2019). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. 3rd revised edition. Nairobi: CLIG
12. National Police Service (2018). A Policy framework and strategy for the reorganization of the National Police Service and provision of decent and affordable housing for police officers, and integration with communities and neighbourhoods. Nairobi: Government Printer.
13. Ogbo, A.I, Obi, A.H., Agbaeze, F.K. & Ukpere, W. (2014). Strategic restructuring for an effective police system in Nigeria. *Journal of Governance and Regulation*, 3(4)
14. Olalekan, A.O. & Adenkule, S.O. (2019). State policing and the political restructuring debate in Nigeria. *The International Journal of Humanities and Social Studies*, 7(7), 255-260.
<https://doi.org/10.24940/theijhss/2019/v7/i7/HS 1907-024>
15. Okonya, J.M. (2021). Harmonization of the security structure of the National Police Service as a strategy for addressing security challenges in Kenya. (Master’s Thesis, University of Nairobi).
16. Omar, B. (2007). South Africa’s Police (SAPS) costly restructuring: A review of public order policing capacity. Institute of Security Studies Monograph Series No. 138
17. Padurariu, A 2014. The Implementation of Police Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Analyzing UN and EU Efforts. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 3(1): 4, pp. 1-18, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.db>
18. Thomas, M. (2008). Police restructuring in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Problems of internationally-led security sector reform. *Journal of Intervention and State Building*, 2(1), 1-22.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17502970701810856>.
19. UNODC (2018). Final independent project evaluation of the police reform programme in Kenya. New York: United Nations.
20. Van Graan, J. & Ukpere, W.I. (2015). Restructuring police organizations: The significance of global experiences for the South African Police Service. *Problems and Perspectives in Management* 13(2).
21. Wanjiru, W.W. & Maina, S. (2021). Corporate restructuring and organizational performance of the National Police Service in Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 3(6), 55-70



© 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>).