

Peacekeeping as Coup Avoidance: Lessons from Ghana

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Abstract

Recent scholarship has claimed that peacekeepers are more likely to mutiny or attempt military coups against their governments after returning home. These trends stand in contrast to the case of Ghana, which witnessed a perhaps unprecedented transition out of the “coup trap” to stable democratic rule, including multiple transfers of power to the political opposition while providing substantial and ongoing peacekeeping manpower. This is especially interesting given Ghana’s infamous mutiny in the Congo and the coup against Kwame Nkrumah, had their roots in peacekeeping. Potentially seen as a deviant case through the lens of recent scholarship, as evaluation of Ghana’s experience illustrate that different leaders under various regime types deliberately utilized peacekeeping deployments as a coup avoidance strategy. This experience has also acted as a tool to gain military resources from foreign donors, while the government has deliberately made efforts to avoid mission hardships and perceptions of victimisation seen in other contingents.

Keywords

Ghana, peacekeeping, civil-military relations, military coups, mutiny

Introduction

Following the pronounced increase in the number and scale of peacekeeping operations in the post-Cold War era, scholars have sought to investigate the efficacy of these missions. This body of work has primarily considered the impact of the mission on the mission location,¹ particularly regarding issues such as conflict recurrence, the level of violence,² and different aspects of civilian victimisation.³ Less scholarship has investigated the impact of peacekeeping on the state providing the peacekeepers. This is an especially important area of study, given the increased burden of peacekeeping being placed on countries that often have a lower capacity to address the presumptive negative consequences of participation.

Perhaps not coincidentally, a number of scholars have offered a decidedly negative assessment of participation in peacekeeping operations (PKOs). Sotomayor,⁴ for example, argues that peacekeeping has had a deleterious effect on dynamics such as corruption and the military's involvement in politics, and argues peacekeepers often return home to back increasingly authoritarian regimes. Though ethno-political considerations were essential to the motive, Baledrokadroka,⁵ himself a former peacekeeping commander, points to Fiji's participation in PKOs as inflating the armed forces' view of their role in politics and helping to legitimize their coups d'état. Cunliffe's account corroborated this by indicating that Fijian peacekeepers' experience in Lebanon and other settings has also heightened their awareness of the country's ethnic rivalries.⁶ Building on insinuations from ousted presidents, scholars such as Saine have even suggested a potential contagion effect, in which peacekeepers may emulate coup instigators from other contingents who attempt coups.⁷ Dwyer's investigation of nearly two dozen West African states, meanwhile, suggests that peacekeeping missions have prompted army mutinies in at least ten countries.⁸

We hope to add to this scholarship in two broad respects. First, prior assessments often specifically select on the dependent variable, identifying cases of military insubordination without consideration of dynamics in otherwise similar cases that did not experience mutinies or coups. Prior literature focusing on West Africa, for example, limits analyses to what has historically been the most coup-prone and mutiny-prone region.⁹ Second, as noted in recent efforts from Lundgren¹⁰ and Daxecker et al.,¹¹ prior work on the perceived hazards of peacekeeping has not accounted for the processes that drive countries to participate.

A full appraisal of these dynamics reveals a potential paradox. While at least ten West African countries have experienced peacekeeping-related mutinies,¹² one of the region's largest contributors, Ghana, has actually experienced a remarkable turnaround in civilian control of the armed forces. Further, Ghana's boom in PKO contributions during the 1990s directly accompanied the transition to and consolidation of democratic rule, complete with multiple peaceful transfers of executive authority to the political opposition. That such stabilisation could occur during major PKO participation¹³ is especially interesting as Ghana's entry into its coup trap was initially motivated in part by grievances stemming from participation in the United Nations Mission in the Congo.¹⁴

In this paper, we attempt to explain this puzzle by systematically assessing the Ghanaian experience with peacekeeping. With a history replete with military coups, and considerable peacekeeping experience, Ghana could be seen as a "deviant case" scenario for recent literature. According to Jack Levy,¹⁵ studies using deviant case research design should focus on explaining observed empirical contradictions in prevailing theoretical propositions, with the goal of clarifying why the case deviates from theoretical expectations. Considering Ghana's fraught civil-military

history, and its active participation in peacekeeping missions over recent decades, Ghana emerges as an especially useful country of study.

In contrast to selecting on cases of coups or mutiny, our assessment ultimately allows us to consider “what went right” in the case. We specifically investigate both the motives that prompted various leaders to contribute to PKOs, as well as consider the impact that deployments had on the armed forces. Our investigation, which includes direct testimony from important figures, shows that various regimes specifically deployed soldiers whose loyalty was questioned, deployments were at times intentionally lengthened in order to keep potential “troublemakers” overseas, and—more generally—peacekeeping offered a number of benefits in regard to funding, materiel, prestige, and professionalism of the armed forces. Each of these dynamics contributed to reducing the opportunity and motive for soldiers to attempt coups. Though other countries could similarly benefit from these advantages, our assessment suggests that Ghana’s soldiers were comparatively better off than their regional counterparts. Further, these differences were not a coincidence. Ghana’s better investment in equipment, logistics, and especially healthcare and allowances, for example, appears to have helped the state avoid the types of grievances that have arisen and prompted both coups and mutinies elsewhere.

Theorizing Military Insubordination

Scholars of civil-military relations have offered a number of explanations for when and why soldiers respect civilian authority. These include arguments related to military professionalization, the ability of leaders to monitor and punish the armed forces for departing from their duties, and dynamics related to the collective interests of the armed forces as an institution or the personal interests of individual soldiers. Though coming from a broad range of perspectives, and looking at

a variety of levels of analysis, these arguments either explicitly or implicitly rely on a similar assumption. Specifically, each relies on soldiers making rational decisions related to their interests.

Feaver, for example, considers a principal-agent framework.¹⁶ A leader or government (the principal) tasks an agent (the armed forces) with a specific task. Generally conceived as providing the state with security against external foes, a more likely scenario in much of the developing world—and Africa in particular—has been to provide the regime security against domestic opponents. Whatever the task, it is often the case that the desires of the principal and agent are not always in line and soldiers can have incentives to shirk and not fully commit to their assigned duties. This can range from mundane activities, such as missing training sessions or skipping a patrol, to more serious actions, such as mutinying against the regime in an effort to improve benefits or attempting a coup in an effort to replace the leader.

Regimes have various options at their disposal when it comes to ensuring the compliance of their agents. Considerable scholarship has followed the lead Samuel Finer's¹⁷ treatment of opportunity and disposition for coups. The former, more commonly referred to as "ability" in contemporary scholarship, focuses on likely obstacles to a coup's planning and execution. These can include "counterbalancing" the armed forces with units specifically tasked with combating coups, intelligence organizations designed to monitor and snuff out coup plots, and a range of other efforts to reduce the ability of military units to coordinate in an attempt.¹⁸ The latter dynamics addressed by Finer, often labeled as the "willingness" of the armed forces to attempt a coup, specifically considers the presence or absence of incentives to defect from the regime. This can also take various forms, including military socialization and professionalization, the organizational interests of the armed forces, and the interests of individual soldiers. Positivist studies on these incentives have relied on available data, particularly cross-national data on military expenditures.

Powell¹⁹ and Leon²⁰ find that higher military expenditures are associated with fewer coup attempts. Qualitative efforts similarly point the importance of the government to support the military as an institution. Huntington²¹, for example, encouraged democratizing states to signal their support of the institution by investing more in individual soldiers and by providing the military with institutional tools such as modernized arms. While increased military capacity can potentially be seen as a threat to a regime²², heightened capacity for coups is meaningless when the military lacks a strong incentive to risk their benefits, freedom, and lives via a coup attempt.

These various approaches collectively point to scenarios in which civil-military relations are likely to suffer, especially when it comes to outcomes such as coups. Military insubordination is more likely when the military has fewer incentives to cooperate with the regime, more grievances against the regime, and when there are few obstacles to coordinating collective action against the regime. In the absence of effective monitoring of the armed forces, and credible threats of punishment when shirking is detected, soldiers are more likely to depart from the wishes of the regime.

As will be illustrated below, peacekeeping missions can influence soldiers' cost-benefit calculations in different ways. Our exploration of the Ghana case, and in peacekeeping-related coups and mutinies more generally, suggests that Ghana's leaders have increasingly been able to utilize peacekeeping to provide positive benefits to soldiers, while limiting the scale of grievances resulting from this participation. We further elucidate this in the following section, beginning with a general treatment of peacekeeping and then providing an in-depth assessment of the Ghanaian experience.

Previous assessments of peacekeeping

Prior scholarship has pointed to both positive and negative aspects of participation in PKOs. For the former, participation was once argued to enhance organisational prestige,²³ increase soldier training and professionalism,²⁴ and even promote the diffusion of democratic norms.²⁵ However, the shift towards peacekeepers from lesser developed and less democratic states could undermine such an assumption. Sotomayor,²⁶ for example, has forcefully argued that there is little reason to expect democratic norms to diffuse when peacekeepers are increasingly recruited from definitively non-democratic states. More broadly, considering the institutional legacies of the contributing state is especially important given the incentive for many states to specifically use PKOs as a solution to a broad range of existing problems.

Many states have used peacekeeping to shore up budget shortfalls and to provide peacekeepers with economic perks. Beyond Africa, Pakistan's nuclear program had earned it a wide swathe of sanctions from the international community in the early 1990s. With the state coffers near empty, peacekeeping provided a lifeline for the government. And while many states opted into the peacekeeping game as demand dramatically increased in the 1990s, two dynamics indicate the personnel-centred goals of Pakistan's decision to join. First, the state provided its soldiers with the full UN allowance, not deducting any portion for administration. Second, they conceived of a rotation system that would allow each unit in the armed forces to participate. In short, they maximised the scale and breadth of the financial benefits of the soldiers.²⁷ Such trends are not limited to a single state, nor a single challenge.

The purported benefits of coup-proofing also encourage states to select into participation. This includes both states that have had relatively peaceful histories, but also those emerging from legacies of military coups and civil wars.²⁸ Country-specific and large-N analyses alike have

suggested that contributions are significantly tied to concerns about the armed forces, with peacekeeping being seen as a potential remedy for several ills.²⁹ These purported benefits are quite varied. Some utilise peacekeeping to improve organisational cohesion and professionalisation. Burundi, for example, sought to increase a common organisational identity following the incorporation of rebels into the ranks of the national army.³⁰ More relevant to the current discussion, some countries specifically pursue peacekeeping as a coup-proofing mechanism. In some cases, leaders simply attempt to move potential coup plotters overseas. On the heels of mass army mutinies in 2017, for example, President Alassane Ouattara deployed hundreds of Cote d'Ivoire's soldiers to the UN mission in Mali. In other cases, governments utilize peacekeeping to dramatically increase individual soldier pay and the resources of the military as an organization.

Whatever the motive and potential benefit of deployments, there is also considerable scepticism about these gains. Aside from peacekeepers being implicated in a number of scandals while abroad, soldiers also appear to be disproportionately more likely to mutiny after returning home. Leading on this front in the African context is Dwyer,³¹ who interviewed numerous mutineers (and non-mutineers) in various West African states. After collecting data on 22 Western and Central African countries, she documented ten peacekeeping-related mutinies in 8 different countries and later identified additional cases from Ethiopia and Burundi. She demonstrates some common grievances, including issues related to pay (both in terms of timely disbursement and amount) and mission-specific hardships.

In the West African subregion, Chad and Nigeria's experiences in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) notably illustrate the issue of mission hardships. Similarly, Nigerian peacekeepers threatened mutiny in 2012 because of extended

deployment beyond contract clauses; so was the case of Sierra Leonean soldiers in AMISOM. Chadian peacekeepers mutinied in 2013 because they were deployed longer than the stipulated period on their contract. Regarding payment-related grievances, The Gambian peacekeepers' poor remuneration and conditions of service owing to the ECOMOG operation in 1992 morphed into mutinies. In Sierra Leone, soldiers who participated in the Darfur mission complained that they only received \$400 out of the full UN rate of \$1,225.³² The same was the case for Guinea Bissauan soldiers, who mutinied as a result of perceived mistreatment originating from ECOMOG and UNAMIL operations in 1993. Payment-related grievances also surfaced among Burkinabe troops during the ECOMOG mission in Liberia in 1999. The case of Burkina Faso is instructive as the mutineers argued that their peers from Mali received 610 dollars per month when they only received 230 dollars.³³

Peacekeeping-induced mutinies are also linked to neglect and poor logistics, equipment and supplies for peacekeepers. This was seen in the case of Nigerian and Gambian troops who complained and subsequently mutinied (in case of Gambia) for logistics, equipment and supplies concerns. Joining concerns raised in Baledrokadroka's work on Fiji,³⁴ and Sotomayor on Nepal,³⁵ this growing literature anticipates that participation in peacekeeping can have distinctly deleterious effects when soldiers experience hardships. This raises the question as to why Ghana has been spared from these adverse outcomes while committing thousands of soldiers to numerous PKOs.

In the following sections, we review the practice of peacekeeping throughout Ghana's history. We start with a chronological overview of Ghana's participation in PKOs, emphasising the motives for participating and the experiences of the soldiers. We group these periods as 1) under Kwame Nkrumah, 2) under the short-lived military regimes, 3) under Jerry Rawlings, 4) under

Kufuor, and 5) Ghana's contemporary peacekeeping activities. We proceed chronologically in order to more coherently illustrate how Ghana's experiences changed over time.

Following this overview, we analyse these experiences, pointing to commonalities and differences among Ghana's experiences under different administrations and identifying commonalities and differences with the experiences of states that have seen peacekeeping have a negative impact on civil-military relations.

Peacekeeping under Nkrumah

The conflict in the Congo in 1960, now the Democratic Republic of Congo had been in the offing for years. However, the decolonization waves across Africa, essentially in the 1960s were often characterized by sudden and radical regime changes and the Congo was no exception. The Congo gained independence on June 30th, 1960 and just a few days later, the Katanga province demanded independence, igniting a secessionist movement that degenerated into a civil war. The UN peacekeeping mission in the Congo was mandated by a Security Council resolution, constituted largely of African troops with a small European contingent.³⁶ The decision taken by Nkrumah (1957-1966) to support the Congo mission was not exclusive. Nonetheless, the involvement in the mission which mirrored Nkrumah's Pan-African and anti-imperialism agenda that would later create problems back home.

As ³⁷ swiftly if the forward march of the African revolutionary struggle is to maintain its increasing momentum."³⁸ To accomplish his agenda meant that Nkrumah tailored Ghana's foreign policy to meet these exigencies.³⁹ Ghana's military was to assume a role in Nkrumah's foreign policy, a policy that was not oriented toward the best interested of either Ghana, its soldiers, or the military as an institution.

The first contingent of Ghana peacemakers arrived in the Congo on the 14th of July 1960, constituting roughly 30% of UN troops.⁴⁰ Once in the Congo, Nkrumah surreptitiously took sides in the war in support of Patrice Lumumba's government.⁴¹ Though Nkrumah genuinely wanted peace in the Congo, his support for Lumumba was to protect the 'sanctity' of the Congo's independence, and a desire for a united Congo which would later join the Ghana, Guinea and Mali Union.⁴² Nkrumah was determined to accomplish his motives in the Congo. According to A.A. Afrifa an eventual coup-plotter and a junior officer during the deployment, within a month into the mission, all of Ghana's "forces and equipment were concentrated on the Congo to the detriment of our own country."⁴³

Nkrumah also neglected the security forces during the latter years of his rule. He transformed his personal security apparatus into the Presidential Own Guard Regiment (POGR) in 1960, an event that may have been necessitated by several unsuccessful assassination attempts. The POGR would soon be provided with better ammunition and arms, to the neglect of the national army. As Afrifa narrated it, the POGR received preferential treatment -- they were better paid, and they had better equipment, and the soldiers transferred from the national army to Nkrumah's guards "no longer owed any allegiance and loyalty to the army but to Nkrumah."⁴⁴ Resorting to the POGR caused agitations within the security establishment because the military perceived this as an infringement of their rights, particularly when the members of the presidential guard regiment were better remunerated.⁴⁵

The Congo mission ended in 1964 and the worst of the turmoil had concluded by 1962. Some spoke positively of the experience from a professionalization standpoint, including the British Army Chief of Staff Major General H.T. Alexander⁴⁶ and, as discussed below, Emmanuel Erskine. However, many soldiers who participated in the mission developed their resentment

against Nkrumah's regime while in the Congo, seeing the mission as undermining the military as an institution. The ill-treatment of the army, coupled with Nkrumah's radical foreign policy, his increasingly dictatorial domestic polity, in addition to the Congo fiasco, abruptly ended his government. The 24th February 1966 coup that toppled his regime was planned by military officers who were part of the Ghana contingent to the Congo, among them Afrifa, Ocran, and Kotoka. In Afrifa's account, it was Nkrumah's woeful and disastrous Congo policy that had led to the killing of forty-three Ghanaian soldiers at Port Franqui⁴⁷. Dismayed by the debacle, and by other domestic factors, Afrifa was convinced that a 'military solution' was the only option. Whereas Nkrumah's overthrow had introduced coups and counter-coups in Ghana with adverse security implications, a section of the Ghanaian populace believed the coup was needed to end his radical foreign policy and domestic autocratic tendencies.

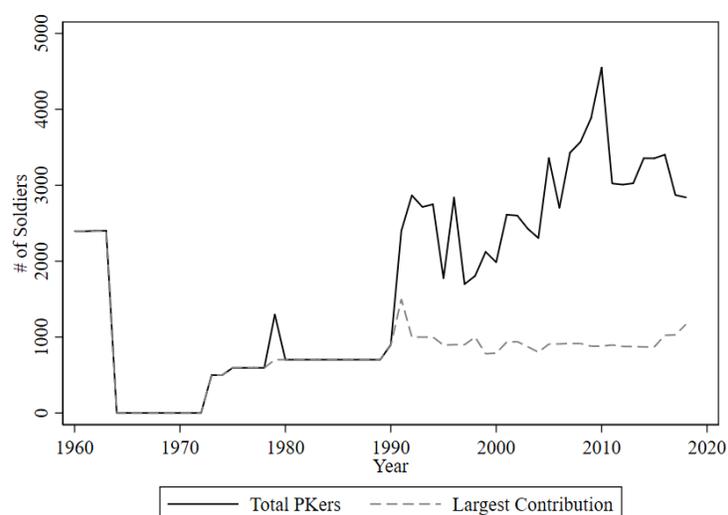
Peacekeeping under the military regimes

The military operation that toppled Nkrumah's government opened a Pandora's box of security problems. For instance, the National Liberation Council (NLC) government that replaced Nkrumah, headed by Ankrah (1966-9) and Afrifa (April-September 1969), handed power over to Busia's civilian government in 1969, only for it to be overthrown in another coup in 1972 by Acheampong. A different military regime would topple Acheampong's administration in 1978, led by Fred Akuffo's Supreme Military Council (SMC), which was in turn ousted in 1979 by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) coup, headed by Rawlings. This epoch in Ghana's history marked a complete breakdown of civilian control of the military and witnessed the most brazen political executions and purges in the country's history. Most notably, Rawlings' AFRC purged the armed forces and executed senior officers and former heads of states including Afrifa, Acheampong, and Akuffo. The AFRC also sentenced dozens of military officers, former officials,

and wealthy business owners.⁴⁸ Moreover, while Rawlings allowed the transition to civilian rule, he soon intervened again on 31 December 1981 to topple Limann's government.

That peacekeeping may have helped Ghana exit this rut is curious given that—according to the very individuals that orchestrated Ghana's first coup—this sequence of events commenced due in part to their perceptions of the Congo mission. Subsequent regimes, however, returned to and remained committed to peacekeeping. Acheampong's regime contributed troops to the Second United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF II) beginning January 1974. This marked the beginning of virtually uninterrupted peacekeeping contributions from Ghana. As illustrated in Figure 1, Ghana has made a contribution to either UN or non-UN-peacekeeping missions even year between 1974 and 2019. As time has passed, Ghana both increased the number of soldiers contributed and the number of missions they are actively involved in. While the typical yearly commitment originally hovered around 700-1000, this exploded after the Cold War, with peak levels topping out at over 4,000 soldiers per year.⁴⁹

Figure 1: Ghana's Deployments to Peacekeeping Operations, 1960-2019⁵⁰



The UNEF II mission had a mandate to supervise the ceasefire between Egypt and Israel at the end of Yom Kippur War. The Ghanaian troops were to oversee the stabilisation of the Suez

Canal area and maintain the buffer zone between the Israeli and Egyptian forces. The Ghana mission rotated about 6,600 soldiers during the period.⁵¹ Unlike the unfavourable experience in the Congo, Ghana's participation in the UNEF II was distinctly positive. The Ghanaian contingent, alongside others, provided the enabling environment that led to the negotiation and signing of the peace treaty following the Camp David Accord in 1979.⁵² According to Brigadier General Emmanuel Kotia, the experience the troops gained during the UNEF II operation "served as the beginning of the involvement of Ghanaian troops in future traditional peace operations resulting from inter-state conflict."⁵³ Ghana's participation in UNEF II lasted until June 1979, when the operation formally ceased. While Ghana's domestic political situation saw pronounced instability during this period, its commitment to peacekeeping remained consistent. And while participating in missions abroad was already seen as a relief valve for domestic pressures, Ghana would see much more deliberate efforts to utilise peacekeeping as a coup-proofing mechanism after the ascendance of Flt Lt Jerry Rawlings.

The Rawlings Era

Under Rawlings, peacekeeping operations spiked, particularly in the 1990s. From 1990-98, Ghana was involved in the ECOWAS operation in Liberia (1990), UNTAC in Cambodia (1992), UNAMIR in Rwanda (1993) and UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone (1998). Participation in the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), a West African multilateral armed force formed to intervene in Liberia in 1990, is worth highlighting. Under Rawlings, Ghana sent the second largest contingent after Nigeria. Rawlings expressed concern about the safety of Ghanaians in Liberia, including reports that Ghanaian dissidents in Liberia had joined the rebels. Rawlings' regime had come to see the conflict as its most significant foreign policy challenge.⁵⁴

Besides safety concern for Ghanaian residents and prospects of dissidents infiltrating Liberian rebels, Rawlings' goal to carve a much broader role for Ghana in the sub-region is also suspected. Specifically, the mission was seen as a "way of establishing his credentials as a regional leader and showing that Ghana was capable of operating on par with Nigeria in West Africa."⁵⁵ The general sentiment regarding the ECOMOG mission in Liberia was adverse. However, the intervention established several relevant precedents. First, it became the first regional force to intervene in a peacekeeping mission outside the tutelage of the UN mandate. Second, it redefined the notion of sovereignty within the context of external intervention.⁵⁶

Rawlings' enthusiasm for peacekeeping operations, while portrayed as furthering the national interest and contributing to the attainment of global peace, had a definitively political rationale. Under Rawlings, peacekeeping operations occurred at the backdrop of enormous economic and security challenges. On the economic front, Ghana had experienced a long-term economic decline, worsened by crop failures in 1982 that resulted from erratic rain and severe harmattan. These factors led to food shortages, increased unemployment, and excessive inflation, creating public disaffection for the regime.⁵⁷ The domestic security landscape deteriorated quickly, leading to several failed coup plots. One report indicated that the primary threat to Rawlings' regime did not stem from "exile groups plotting its demise but from discontent within factions of the military."⁵⁸ The report avers:

The military, which has been a major political force since the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966, is a major problem for the (Rawlings') regime. The government can only exist with the sufferance and loyalty of the major factions within the armed forces, although the loyalty of the army is still uncertain.⁵⁹

The economic challenges the regime faced, coupled with the disruptive nature of the military, were compounded by the deportation of about a million Ghanaians from Nigeria in 1983.⁶⁰ These factors created public disaffection for Rawlings, nurturing an atmosphere conducive

to coup plotting. Rawlings' fledgling government would soon witness agitations within the rank and file of the military, leading to two unsuccessful attempts to overthrow the regime in 1981 alone.⁶¹ The economic challenges Rawlings had to contend with and the military's reluctance to remain in the barracks provided the context for engaging the military extensively in international and multilateral peacekeeping missions.

The UNIFIL mandate in 1978 overlapped with Rawlings' first coup in 1979, engendering security implications for the troops who were about to conclude their participation in UNEF II in the Sinai. The military's inclination to entangle in Ghana's domestic politics convinced the commander of the contingent, Emmanuel Erskine, that sending the "troops home might act as a catalyst for exacerbating the already difficult and uncertain situation."⁶² Instead of sending the contingent home upon the successful conclusion of the operation, with UN permission, they were removed from Sinai and redeployed to the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon. While Rawlings was not keen to see the return of the military, the military itself was cognizant of Ghana's participation in UN peacekeeping operations as a "relief valve for the deadlock in the Ghana Armed Forces."⁶³

Under Rawlings, peacekeeping was continuously used to keep the army busy and divert its attention from political issues.⁶⁴ Peacekeeping helped to keep the troops 'on track,' and away from potential domestic mutinies.⁶⁵ Peacekeeping commitments increased under Rawlings, but the increase also overlapped with the post-cold war peacekeeping demands. Within this context, it is hard to determine if the spike in peacekeeping missions under Rawlings occurred because of a careful political consideration. Nonetheless, Rawlings may have exploited these missions for political expediency to the extent of even initially defying the IMF conditionality that demanded that Ghana keep its military budget low during the period -- a factor that initially prevented the military from obtaining new equipment and sophisticated weapons.⁶⁶ The IMF conditionality

would have curtailed the regime's peacekeeping pledges, but the opposite was the case within the context of growing peacekeeping contributions.

Rawlings' active, and 'subjective' control of the military (perfected through peacekeeping missions) led to spectacular success in curbing military coups.⁶⁷ The military "control mechanisms" helped to subordinate the military for political control and facilitated the securing of the "political space for more enduring and institutionalized forms of political control" of the Ghanaian military.⁶⁸ The "military control" mechanisms and restructuring exercises prevented the occurrence of further counter military rebellion in the country.⁶⁹

And while these missions did put soldiers in danger, grievances among soldiers were mitigated by various dynamics. For example, the hazards faced in Liberia were seen as directly relevant to regional security in a general sense and Ghana's security more specifically. This was in stark contrast to the Congo, where Ghanaians saw little utility in serving. Further, just as Dwyer notes that soldiers often observe their sub-par status relative to other country's contributions, Ghana was widely heralded as having far better resources than other contingents.⁷⁰

Peacekeeping under Kufuor

Kufuor's swearing in as president in January 2001 witnessed attempts to make changes to the security sector. Such efforts can often create strains, as the status quo of previously privileged soldiers may be threatened. This did not stop Kufuor from placing security high on the young administration's agenda, nor did the military's previous proclivity to intervene in national politics.⁷¹ It was Kufuor's security concerns and fear of the military that made him appoint his brother, Addo Kufuor (a medical practitioner by profession) as the new defence minister. Addo

Kufuor's appointment was the president's attempt to keep a close eye on the military, as he was not confident of the armed forces' loyalty.⁷²

Shortly after assuming office, Kufuor disbanded and redeployed the Forces Reserve Battalion, the so-called 64-battalion regiment popularly known in Ghana as the "Commandos."⁷³ The Commandos were considered as Rawlings' most trusted unit. They were extremely effective, trained in Cuba and Libya in specialised forms of combat and had the potential to serve as a serious threat to Kufuor's political survival. This prompted the young administration to send many of the Commandos on various peacekeeping duties, with others rotated to different units of the Ghana Armed Forces. For example, the commanding officer of the Commandos during Rawlings' regime, Lt Col Gbevlo-Lartey, was sent to the Armed Forces Staff College briefly before being sent on peacekeeping duties.⁷⁴ Gbevlo-Lartey was retired from the military altogether on August 19, 2003, on charges of alleged coup plotting. Kufuor similarly insisted on replacing Rawlings' 24 commandos serving as his security detail with 12 armed police officers. Rawlings, agitated with Kufuor's move to replace his loyalists, threatened that Kufuor's government would not last long. Rumours would later surface that a section of the military was planning a coup, though such fears were not realised.⁷⁵

Kufuor further replaced seven senior generals with younger (perhaps more loyal) officers.⁷⁶ Separately from the Commandos saga, Kufuor retired over 2,000 non-commissioned officers (NCOs). According to the president, these NCOs had overstayed their tenure for at least five years and had undermined the advancement of younger soldiers.⁷⁷ The sacking enraged Rawlings, who argued the move's sole intent was to purge "his men." While the retirement of the NCOs may not have been carried out on party or ethnic lines, the exercise paved the way for Kufuor to fill about

25 per cent of the military's vacancies. This was an avenue to consolidate his sway in the military, as he did not want a replay of what occurred to Busia in 1972 and Limann in 1981.⁷⁸

Besides disbanding and redeploying Rawlings' commandos, coupled with the compulsory retirement of the non-commissioned officers, Kufuor's security priorities shifted from the military to the police, partially due to the "historical and ideological inclinations of the regime itself, and partly a result of the dramatically deteriorating crime situation that followed the change in government."⁷⁹ While challenges remained, Ghana witnessed growing democratic oversight of the security sector, while potential troublemakers continued to be deployed as peacekeepers. Under Kufuor, the political space gradually widened in a manner that encouraged non-security institutions such as the parliament, civil society and think tanks finally playing essential roles in the governance of the security sector.⁸⁰

Peacekeeping in democratic Ghana

Ghana's involvement in peacekeeping effectively standardised from the administration of John Atta Mills onward. Peacekeeping missions now officially embraced two broad but interrelated motives. First, shared cultural affinities with its neighbours and the fear of conflict spillover inspire Ghana to commit troops.⁸¹ For example, the refugee problem in the Liberian civil wars, coupled with political crises in Togo and Côte d'Ivoire, motivated Ghana to find a solution for these conflicts before they degenerated into a more significant regional crisis. The 2010 Ivorian crisis did not only create a refugee spillover in Ghana but also triggered a deterioration of relations between the two states. Ghana also believes disputes in neighbouring countries also have important developmental implications, and the containment of regional conflict can provide the additional benefit of protecting Ghana's developmental agenda.

Secondly, on the global stage, Ghana's participation in UN peacekeeping missions is inspired by an entrenched obligation to help maintain global peace and security as enshrined in the UN Charter. This commitment is strengthened by domestic legal principles embodied in Ghana's 1992 Constitution. The Constitution's Article 40 states that Ghana should promote respect for international law and treaty commitments and the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means. The Constitution enjoins Ghana to adhere to principles enshrined in (i) the Charter of the United Nations; (ii) the Charter of African Union; (iii) the Commonwealth; (iv) the Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States; and any other International Organizations of which Ghana is a member.⁸² Thus, involvement in international peacekeeping missions is Ghana's commitment to sustaining global peace, security, and stability. Peacekeeping mission "offers Ghana a mechanism to exert influence in world affairs and enhance its image and prestige in the international system."⁸³

Reviewing the benefits of peacekeeping

It is common to find Ghana's involvement in international peacekeeping couched in a language that suggests that Ghana has remained committed to a peaceful and secure international system. Such inclination steeped in altruistic motives cannot be wholly representative of all the reasons Ghana remained a steadfast contributor. Just as soldiers' motives for insubordination generally follow clear incentive structure, so too have various governments' use of peacekeeping. The rationale for participation in PKOs, especially under Rawlings, has often resembled the diversionary theory of peacekeeping. This argues that deploying troops to peacekeeping operations is a strategy to distract the military from the misrule of the leader or other domestic problems.⁸⁴ The Ghanaian army was regularly occupied abroad, preventing them the opportunity to interfere in domestic politics.

Deployments under Rawlings also mimicked Worboys'⁸⁵ account where peacekeeping offered a way to reorient the military in Argentina. Like the Argentine case, PKOs were used to prevent the military from “operating as a significant actor in domestic politics, divesting the military of any praetorian tendencies, creating institutional structures for democratic control of the armed forces.”⁸⁶ These missions exposed the forces to the internal conflicts of other countries. They helped to highlight the perils of conflict and inculcated in the soldiers the importance of mediation and de-escalation as conflict response strategies.⁸⁷ Through peacekeeping, the Ghanaian armed forces were able to internalise the military’s neutrality in domestic politics, serving as a restraint mechanism that saw the soldier’s willingness to involve in domestic politics wane.⁸⁸

Private gains to peacekeepers also took the form of professional experience, self-actualisation, and pecuniary benefits. On professional experience, evidence from peacekeepers and their leadership suggests that soldiers look forward to peacekeeping as a professional opportunity.⁸⁹ The realisation of such benefits dates to the 1960s. For example, Erskine, who would become a commander of Ghana’s peacekeeping force in the Middle East, recounts how as a fresh trainee from the military academy in the 1960s, inspired by the exploits of his fellow Ghanaian soldiers on UN peacekeeping assignment in the Congo, saw international peacekeeping as an outlet to exhibit his training and experience acquired from the military academy.⁹⁰ And when he finally found himself in the ranks of the UN, he spoke highly of what the experience afforded him and other peacekeepers. If these sentiments are at all representative, then the role of the peacekeeping experience for the fulfilment of a sense of personal accomplishment for soldiers cannot be overemphasised.

Next, at the institutional level, Ghana’s military sees opportunity in international peacekeeping as a source of upholding professional standards of the institution. After

independence, the government of Ghana considered it a principal objective to maintain the professional standards of the military bequeathed to it by the British, and international peacekeeping was deemed a useful means to keep up the military's professional standard.⁹¹ Even though geopolitical fallout from the Congo mission often crowded its successes, the Ghanaian government and its military hierarchy judged Ghana's participation favourably and highly regarded the experience for its military culture. As Erskine recounted, after a debut in the Congo, the Ghanaian government sought for more peacekeeping to continue receiving the associated professional experience, despite the obvious hazards that this could entail.⁹² The core areas where participation directly impacted Ghana's military are related to the acquisition of weapons, equipment and materiel, and the maintenance of professionalism and skills level commensurate with international standards. PKO experience also reinforced chances of landing non-peacekeeping field jobs with the UN or other organisations. A core of Ghanaian soldiers has acquired other skills in the peacekeeping field such as mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution.⁹³

Next, perhaps the most immediate and readily relatable benefits soldiers have gained from Ghana's engagement in international peacekeeping is the monetary compensation received, with implications for an improved standard of living for their families and the opportunity to acquire property and to make investments. Erskine⁹⁴ chronicled some of these direct benefits in his experience, noting there are informal policies advising soldiers to put their heightened wages into profitable ventures for themselves and their families. The proper context to appreciate what the extra money paid to peacekeepers meant to them is provided by Clune,⁹⁵ who observes the economic conditions and living standards of soldiers across Ghana's military history has not been typically among the best. For a long time, Ghana's military has been represented as a place for

unaccomplished, poorly educated, and school dropouts, and most enlisted lived lowly lives economically due to poor remuneration. As such, extra income from peacekeeping contributes significantly to their lives and offers the opportunity to acquire property and make an investment towards enhanced social security.⁹⁶

On the other hand, deployments inevitably have the potential to introduce grievances. Indeed, Ghana's early coup plotters indicated the seeds for the coup against Nkrumah were planted in the Congo, and recent scholarship has pointed to a number of army mutinies being directly motivated by peacekeeping experiences.⁹⁷ Ghana's avoidance of these problems while fielding substantial commitments to PKOs leads to the question of what has gone right in their experience. Below we briefly evaluate some potentially distinctive trends.

First, Ghana has maintained a stronger commitment to procurement and upkeep of the equipment available to its soldiers. With the current Wet Lease system, troop-contributing nations pre-finance their equipment and materiel and later get reimbursed by the UN. Ghanaian governments have taken advantage of this arrangement since its inception in 1995, ensuring its equipment is in working order. Considering that the Ghana Armed Forces have been subjected to stringent budgetary allocation consistently over the years, maintaining a decent trajectory of investment in materiel would be an uncomfortable burden.⁹⁸ Returning to theoretical perspectives on civilian control, this has effectively followed Huntington's suggestion to "give them toys."⁹⁹

Second, the Ghanaian military has also reaped substantial benefits through military grants, equipment and materiel from donors and international partners. For instance, the United States since the 1990s has provided technical expertise and equipment to through programs such as the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) and the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program.¹⁰⁰ Other partner programs include the Reinforcement of African

Peacekeeping Capabilities Program (RECAMP) by the French government and the Military Training Assistance Program (MTAP) by the Canadian government.¹⁰¹ China has also provided significant funding for Ghana's procurement and maintenance of military equipment. For a country that has faced substantial domestic procurement challenges, Ghana has made a substantial effort to boost soldier resources through international programs.

Third, Ghana has been proactive with remuneration. The UN determines compensation packages it gives its peacekeepers, traditionally around \$1100-\$1200 per month, which is allocated to the contributing government. The government then takes a cut for administrative costs, and this cut varies considerably from state to state. Under the administration of the New Patriotic Party, president Kufuor increased the peacekeepers' remuneration by well over 50%, from US\$16 to US\$27 a day. Under the second NDC regime, president Mills further increased it to US\$30. Under president Mahama, confidential documents made available to the media suggest that an increase of US\$30 to US\$31 was turned down by the military hierarchy and was subsequently revised to US\$35.¹⁰² The adjustment was not implemented before the Mahama administration left office, but this package was re-announced by the new Akufo Addo administration. These amounts – already substantially larger than most African contributors – have steadily risen over time. The numbers show that Ghanaian peacekeepers now receive about 85% of the UN monthly peacekeeping allocations, something beyond reach of most peacekeepers from countries in the subregion.

The revised policy also states that peacekeepers would now be paid at their peacekeeping posts. Few contingents receive wages while on deployment, with most not being paid until returning home. Governments have suggested soldiers run the risk of spending their allowances while deployed and returning home empty-handed. However, large lump-sum payments have caused considerable problems elsewhere. For example, former Ethiopian peacekeepers mutinied

after not being able to be provided with the sum of their wages directly in cash upon their return.¹⁰³ Former Ugandan peacekeepers, meanwhile, have on multiple occasions threatened to mutiny due to continuing delays in compensation, delays that for some soldiers have reached as long as two years. Ghana's evolving policy would appear to be proactive in both providing a comparatively larger allowance than most countries, while also quickly dispersing funds.

Fourth, a perhaps underappreciated dynamic is the provision of health supplies and services. Most regionally-led peacekeeping missions Ghana has participated in during the 1990s and 2000s lacked centralised medical distribution, creating problems with access to essential medical services. The issue of medical supplies and services became prominent during the ECOMOG-led peacekeeping mission to Liberia. While ECOMOG's policy regarding medical supplies and distribution was to combine medical equipment and personnel from participating contingents, most contingents did not take this requirement seriously. This created a situation in which the Ghanaian troops, the best equipped regarding medical supplies, were given preferential treatment for vital health services, including surgeries.¹⁰⁴

Ghana has also been more committed to otherwise mundane yet essential equipment, such as uniforms and boots. Ghanaian troops participating in the ECOMOG mission in Liberia even freely distributed or sold excess uniforms and boots to soldiers from underequipped units, particularly to the Nigerian troops.¹⁰⁵ So poor was the Nigerian experience that dozens of soldiers were eventually required to be airlifted to Egypt for medical care, a development that also saw the threat of mass suicide. Awareness of discrepancies in access to health services and the logistical constraints some of the contingents had to deal with may not only have hurt the troop's morale. Like mission-related grievances such as payments issues, logistical constraints in the form of

limited supply of uniforms, boots and health deliveries can have a direct and immediate impact on the troop's wellbeing, as well as their willingness to engage in insubordination.

Remaining challenges

While Ghana has done better than many states in addressing the needs of its peacekeeping forces, there remain some grievances. First, perhaps the most notable involves allegations of corruption and favouritism in the selection process. Soldiers and police officers have reportedly been required to pay bribes to their commanders in order to be considered. For instance, the selectees for the South Sudan mission “had paid their way through, without recourse to existing procedures, and that the pre-selection exercise...was a matter of formality, as those at the helm of affairs, were believed to be raking as much as GH¢250,000 from the deal.”¹⁰⁶ It insisted that while previous selection processes to participate in peacekeeping missions had bordered on the personnel's academic accomplishment, driving skill, shooting expertise and excellent character, in this case, the selected personnel were supposedly asked by their superiors to pay GH¢5,000 before being considered for the mission.

Second, there have been reports that the selection process for some of the peacekeeping missions was not circulated broadly enough. In one case, a communique relayed to encourage the selection of 50 women was ignored and deliberately kept away from the intended recipients. In one instance, the “whole thing was done in secrecy and kept away from serving personnel in the regions.”¹⁰⁷ Even of the selectees who failed a stage of the process, some mysteriously had their names in the final list through the back door.¹⁰⁸ The selection for the African Union mission in South Sudan in 2005 saw some officers that were dropped early in the process chosen, whereas several who were well qualified and had met all the criteria, were dropped at selection time.¹⁰⁹ Of

course, these allegations have been rebuffed by the top hierarchy of the armed forces and the police service.

Third, though Ghana tends to pay its soldiers promptly, there have been occasional pay-related complaints. For instance, the Ghanabatt troops returning from South Sudan alleged that instead of being paid in South Sudan, they were paid upon arrival in Ghana, under floodlight.¹¹⁰ The aggrieved soldiers complained that the monies due them were used for private business deals and later paid in smaller denominations, eventually making them lose part of the money when they converted it into the local currency. In another case, soldiers who had served in various peacekeeping capacities in Lebanon claimed to have been given \$1,000 instead of \$3,000 as their accumulated payments, a paper critical of Akuffo Addo's government and sympathetic to the main opposition party, alleged.¹¹¹ The incident triggered bitterness among soldiers who anticipated getting the \$3,000 promised them. The military, however, rebuffed the allegations that it shortchanged and underpaid the soldiers.¹¹²

Most recently, soldiers deployed in South Sudan were allegedly raising the prospect of mutiny via WhatsApp. In contrast to recent overtures made by president Akufo-Addo, the soldiers claimed there were told funding shortages would reduce their payment from \$5000 to \$2000, and that pay would not be received until returning to Ghana.¹¹³ Questions were further raised when it was revealed that soldiers participating in the mission were required to pay \$740 for their flights, while Ghanaian police deploying to the same mission were only required to pay \$500. Regardless of the merit of these complaints, perceptions of their veracity among Ghana's soldiers remain a potential challenge for the government, even if a modest one. Though the government has done demonstrably more than many other peacekeeping contributing countries to address the needs of its soldiers, there still exists complaints against upper ranks of the armed forces—and to a lesser

degree the government itself—that mirror those of countries that have seen peacekeeping have a deleterious effect on civil-control.¹¹⁴ And though Ghana’s civil-military ills have been limited to rumours in recent years, rumours could be a legitimate reflection of animosity among the men in uniform. Furthermore, borrowing from prior civil-military relations scholarship, a lack of coups and mutinies in Ghana could be less of a consequence of military professionalization and the consolidation of civilian control, and more a product of soldiers simply being incentivised by the payoffs of PKO participation.

Conclusion

In contrast to recent scholarship that has attested to a mutiny or coup-inducing effect of peacekeeping participation, Ghana appears to have escaped notable ill effects. Given the country’s prior struggles with civilian control of the armed forces, including a major peacekeeping-related mutiny and a subsequent coup, this is a notable occurrence. This is especially interesting given that the country has also seen the military remain sidelined from the political process through multiple political transitions following incumbent electoral losses. While one could suspect Ghana would have been a most likely case for continued civil-military friction, its fate has suggested quite the opposite.

Our assessment of the Ghanaian experience in peacekeeping points to motives common to other contributors, including desires to improve the prestige, resources, and financing of the armed forces, as well as to explicitly divert the military away from politics. However, Ghana’s peacekeeping efforts show a substantially larger commitment to the resources available to its soldiers. Aside from doing better than many other states in providing these resources, Ghana has also acted as an important resource for other countries’ soldiers, such as reliance on Ghanaian medical personnel. These trends appear to have allowed a number of administrations to avoid

alienating the armed forces, and civil-military relations has substantially stabilised over the last thirty years. Our assessment suggests that peacekeeping missions, while certainly bringing risk and a variety of potential grievances, are likely most problematic when resources are limited. In other words, grievances are often less about the mission itself, and more about perceptions of the government's commitment to the interests of the soldiers.

The recent attempts by scholars to scrutinize how involvement in peacekeeping missions influence domestic politics in troop-contributing states is a laudable one. These studies herald a shift in decades of scholarly publications overly interested in peacekeeping missions influence in the receiving states. Still, within this direction, there is a proclivity to select cases on the dependent variable; sampling cases of military mutiny/coup without scrutinizing otherwise similar scenarios that did not experience mutinies or coups. While the recent shift to examine peacekeeping effects on mission sending states is laudable, it is critically important to shift from using evidence that neatly supports such theories to those that disproves them. As the Ghana case has demonstrated, more studies are required where troop-contributing states have not experienced significant deleterious effects on the domestic polity in the developing world.

As well, evidence from Ghana requires further inquiry in the areas of troop welfare (during the mission and home). Future studies may also probe the politics and corruption tag surrounding troop selection. The evidence from Ghana also shows that besides payment-related grievances, troop-sending governments and most notably, the United Nations must take proactive measures to mitigate materiel and welfare-related grievances that drive troops to mutiny.

Disclosure statement

The authors reported no potential conflict of interest.

Notes

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from UNEF II to UNIFI when the former mission wrapped up. We are thus cautious in our wording and defer to using language that refers to general levels of forces instead of the number of soldiers serving.

- ⁵⁰ We consulted various data sources for troop commitments. As a starting point, we considered the UN Website. Being limited to a post-1990 timeframe, and UN missions, we considered alternative data sources. This primarily involved Gaibulloev et al. on non-UN commitments, and various mission-specific accounts. The following sources were especially helpful: Simon Baynham, *The Military and Politics in Nkrumah's Ghana* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988); Khusrav Gaibulloev, Justin George, Todd Sandler, and Hirofumi Shimizu, "Personnel Contributions to UN and Non-UN Peacekeeping Missions: A Public Goods Approach," *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no 6 (2015): 727-742; Novosseloff, Alexandra. "United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL I)." In Koops, Joachim, Joachim Alexander Koops, Norrie MacQueen, Thierry Tardy, and Paul D. Williams, eds. *The Oxford handbook of United Nations peacekeeping operations*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2015; Dieh, Paul F. "Second United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF II)." In Koops, Joachim, Joachim Alexander Koops, Norrie MacQueen, Thierry Tardy, and Paul D. Williams, eds. *The Oxford handbook of United Nations peacekeeping operations*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2015; Kotia, Emmanuel Wekem. *Ghana Armed Forces in Lebanon and Liberia Peace Operations*. Lexington Books, 2015.
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