



United Nations and peacekeeping: revisiting Ghana's contribution to peace and security in Africa

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Received: 19 April 2023 / Accepted: 13 November 2023 / Published online: 27 December 2023
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Abstract

This paper examines Ghana's contribution to peace and security in Africa through the United Nations Peacekeeping operations (PKOs). The paper employed the qualitative research approach (interviews and content analysis) in achieving the intended objectives. It relied on three theories: neo-institutionalism, collective security and rational choice theory as major theoretical frameworks for the analysis. The paper argues, besides, the economic benefits to the individual and the state, state image and reputation, both military and democratic regimes have committed resources to such missions in an attempt to legitimize their regimes and also for the survival of the regime in power. Suffice to say neo-institutionalism and collective security are employed as means to achieve a rational choice objective. The findings, however, suggest that even though coup aversion might not be the direct motivation for Ghana's enormous contribution to PKOs, especially within the subregion, issues of state security and peace, legitimacy and regime survival are of prime concern. It is recommended that the UN should endeavor to restructure PKOs to ensure global political stability as well as to discourage illegitimate regimes from exploiting the missions.

Keywords United Nations peacekeeping missions · Ghana · Neo-institutionalism · Collective security · Rational choice theory · Regime survival

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Introduction

On the 8th of March 1957, Ghana became a member of the UN, less than a week after independence (The Permanent Mission of Ghana to the UN 2021). Ghana has since been involved in PKOs¹ around the world and contributed to the body's first deployment on 5th July, 1960, with 770 security personnel as part of the first 3500 troops launched in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Ankrah 2018). The term "peacekeeping" refers to operations aimed at improving conditions for long-term peace (Ankrah 2018) or a third-party intervention to separate and pacify conflicting parties (Etim and Ikem 2019). Sixty years on, the country's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs) targeted at improving the performance of other peacekeepers involved in these complicated operations has been enormous (Abg-enyega 2021). It is believed that Ghana is a valuable contributor to the UN PKOs and that Ghanaian security personnel contribution on the field includes, demining, cease-fire monitoring, patrolling, training host-state police forces, and upholding law and order, respectively, while others have been assigned to senior posts such as Force Commanders, Police Commissioners, Special Representatives of the Security General, and Chief Military Observers, to name a few. Major General Delali Johnson Sakyi, for example, was named Force Commander of the UN peacekeeping force in the Republic of South Sudan (Aubyn and Aning 2013). Ghana has contributed personnel to the DR Congo crisis, the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, political crisis in Togo and Ivory Coast. Why do Ghanaian leaders continue to support such missions in spite of the challenges? Beyond the economic, state image and professional training, what else accounts for the stern commitment to peacekeeping missions (PKMs)? Could collective security and neo-institutionalism theoretical underpinnings only serve as levers for the pursuance of a 'rational choice objective'? Few studies that have been carried out on Ghana's contribution focus primarily on the nation's active participation and benefits; hardly has any existing work looked into the theories underpinning Ghana's keen involvement in the United Nations PKOs. The current study seeks to interrogate these questions and provoke further debate on the subject.

The paper is divided into four sections. It proceeds with an overview of the study, provides the objective and research questions and discusses the conceptual framework. The second section captures literature review on Ghana's contribution to PKMs in Africa and the theoretical framework. The third section presents the research methods. This is followed with the final section, which presents the results and discussion. It also provides the concluding remarks.

¹ 1 For this study, PKMs and PKOs are used interchangeably.

Conceptual clarification

Peacekeeping refers to operations aimed at improving conditions for long-term peace (Ankrah 2018) or a third-party intervention to separate and pacify conflicting parties (Etim and Ikem 2019). PKMs (From UN perspective) is an effective tool available to assist host countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace.

Neo-institutionalism is a strand of the liberalism ideology that recognizes the parochial interest of states in the international system but advocates for the need for cooperation to achieve collective objectives. Collective security is a theory that preaches the need for cooperation among states to ensure domestic, regional and international security. It validates the need to contribute personnel towards UN PKOs. Rational choice theory explains that human beings may act by consciously weighing the pros and cons of available alternatives. In international relations, the theory explains that states in the international system make (foreign) policy decisions based on expected outcomes that are consistent with their national interest or domestic needs.

Ghana's contribution to security in Africa

Ghana's contribution to security in Africa has been demonstrated through its association and subsequent commitment to the AU and ECOWAS. Its membership in these regional organizations mandates a level of commitment towards peace and security on the continent. Birikorang (2007) notes that Ghana's contribution to peace and security in Africa dates back to the 1950s through the works of its first president, Kwame Nkrumah. In Africa, Ghana was the first country to deploy troops for PKOs in the then Congo, now DRC in 1960 during the crisis that later culminated in the assassination of President Patrice Lumumba (UN 2019). Since then, the country has been involved in a number of peacebuilding activities on the continent. Ghana has also deployed troops for non-UN missions. Ghana sent two military observers as part of the African Union Mission in Sudan between 2004 and 2006 and contributed to the force headquarters of the AU Mission in Somalia (Aubyn and Aning 2013).

Many Ghanaian peacekeepers are very involved in PKOs in South Sudan and other parts of Africa as acknowledged by the UNDP Resident Representative in Ghana (Lusigi 2022). In 2008, Ghana, through its president, John Agyekum Kufour, who also doubled as the AU Chair led a mediation and peacebuilding process in Kenya following the election dispute between Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga (Modern Ghana 2008). As AU Chair, Kufour led, and subsequently tasked another Ghanaian of global repute, Kofi Annan, a former UN chief, to lead a team of distinguished personalities to negotiate a peace process between the opposing factions. This mediation process halted further killings, leading to a peaceful and stable Kenya, and Africa in general.

As a regional leader in the ECOWAS sub-region, Ghana's contribution to peace and security has equally been present. In 2003, Ghana sent 300 and 250 troops

to Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia respectively, as part of an ECOWAS peacekeeping missions, and provided an engineer corps comprising 120 troops to support the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (Aubyn and Aning 2013). In Liberia, Birikorang (2007) recounts that Ghana was part of the five ECOWAS members that deployed troops before the UN Security Council belatedly sanctioned a mission to the country. Birikorang, again, shares that Ghana was also instrumental in a Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) set up in 1990 by ECOWAS to ensure peace and security in Liberia. Ghana's president at the time, Jerry John Rawlings was very instrumental in brokering several peace agreements in Ghana between 1994 and 1995 (Birikorang 2007). President Kufour also worked very hard to broker peace agreement between opposing factions in the second Liberia war in June, 2003.

Scholarship on Ghana's PKOs are few. Banini et al. (2020) presents a deviant account of PKOs leading to mutiny or military coups, arguing that the case of Ghana stands in sharp contrast to such scholarship. They, therefore, focused on the means by which the country has achieved less or free post-PKO coups rather than the motivations for the increased participation in the PKOs. Aning and Aubyn (2013) move away from the literature contending for national interests and the maintenance of international peace as key reasons for a country's participation in PKOs to simply look at the complexity of the motivations for participation, citing a number of reasons including the following as the key ones: "to keep its (Ghana's) neighbourhood safe and peaceful, a principled commitment to the UN's peace and security architecture, and the operational and financial benefits that stem from providing peacekeepers" (Aning 2007, as cited in Aning and Aubyn 2013, p. 270). They however, admit that there is a possible result of lack of desire to stage a coup against a democratic government over particularly economic-related agitation. They, thus, hardly focus on the roles of rational choice, collective security and the neo-functionalism debate.

Albrecht (2022), in a special issue, focuses on how Ghana's internal security is shaped by PKMs using assemblage as a theoretical tool. The issue explores how peacekeeping impact and influence the provision of internal security by the agencies tasked with policing of the state. Prouza and Horak (2015), come close to applying the rational choice theory to the analysis of PKM in the context of Ghana but limit the analysis to a comparative assessment of the number of troop contributions between military and democratic regimes and conclude that there is no significant difference. Notably, their analysis is problematic as it relied too much on theoretical assumptions. Again, they also failed to expand the scope to look at the possible implicit outcomes. The current study relies both on theoretical and empirical approaches; it expands the scope to include the possible outcomes, relying on in-depth interviews with highly qualified persons from the military, official documents, academics and other secondary sources.

Theoretical framework

The argument advanced in the paper is premised on neo-institutionalism, collective security (CS) and rational choice theory. Neo-institutionalism is regarded as one of the new strands of theories related to the institutional logic perspective [liberalism]

(Gold and Mcglinchey 2017; Humpal 2020). The theory has also been referred to as new-institutionalism in other scholarly works (Guerrero 2019; Zaslavskaya 2022), apparently, in an attempt to explain that the ‘neo’ means new (Agboka 2018). In response to criticism, initiatives to adapt and/or reformulate past institutionalism were attempted, resulting in new institutionalism (Guerrero 2019). In support, Zaslavskaya (2022) believes that modern institutionalism shifted away from the classical institutionalist focus on international institutions as international actors, instead of focusing on the relationships between structure and agency as a framework for future inter-state interactions. In the same vein, Agboka (2018) explains that the theory evolved, as a revised version, of liberal institutionalism, in an attempt to correct the deficiencies inherent in the former. The basic concept of neo-institutionalism is that while the state’s supremacy in global politics is indisputable, it as well acknowledges and sanctions the participation of “other actors in the international system” (Agboka 2018, p. 5).

Thus, neo-institutionalism roots for cooperation among institutions to achieve collective objectives. The theory vouches cooperation to satisfy common interests other than individual parochial interests. Whyte (2012) makes a compelling argument that while realists believe that survival in the anarchic international system is crucial and that states’ intentions are unknown owing to personal interests, neo-liberal institutionalists acknowledge that interest dictates the conduct of states, but are considerably more optimistic about cooperation. [Neo]institutionalists, like realists, are concerned about cheating, but unlike neorealists, they have a high level of trust in the institutions themselves. However, Alvesson and Spicer (2018) assert, as a form of criticism, that neo-institutionalism appears to be facing a mid-life crisis in the sense that motivation and objectives for the evolution of the theory appear over-reaching, myopic, tautology, and often seen as a form of pseudo-progress which rather seems to be re-inventing the wheel. Nonetheless, it relevant to the UN PKMs as both state and non-state actors are to cooperate for a common goal.

Moreso, the theory of CS serves as a suitable guide for this study. Davis (2016) is of the view that the theory dates back to the endorsement of the “Westphalia Treaties” in 1648, which ended the Thirty Years War, and was revived with the formation of the League of Nations in the 1920s. Aleksovski et al. (2014) agree with Davis (2016) that the term “collective security,” which is now a UN principle, originated with the League of Nations. Mwangwabi (2017) claims, however, that the institutional origin of CS can be traced to European powers’ attempts to preserve peace and security within the nineteenth century international system known as “the Concert of Europe,” but an institutionalized system of CS was only obvious after the First World War, when the League of Nations was formed in 1919. He goes on to say that after the League’s failure in the years leading up to and during WWII, and the subsequent development of the UN in a renewed effort to implement the vision, modern-day CS became popular.

The theory is based on the assumption that the United Nations is a coercive system in which member states act cooperatively to ensure internal harmony and, as a result, to enhance international amity and security (Bo 2018). Thus, collective security preaches the need for cooperation to ensure domestic, regional and international security. It therefore, validates the need to contribute personnel towards UN PKOs.

The enemy, in a CS system is someone who poses a danger to regional or international peace and security. Any country in the regional or international system that commits aggression, jeopardizes the peace, or whose act falls short of “civilized behavior” is violating the CS agreements and is deemed liable to enforcement action (Aleksovski et al. 2014). Thus, as a member of the comity of nations, Ghana deems it necessary and even obligatory to contribute to PKMs within Africa and across the globe.

Paternoster et al (2017) discloses that rational choice theory (RCT) has evolved, developed, and popularized through the works of Adam Smith, Gary Becker, and Derek Cornish and Ronald Clarke. Sociologist George Homans, Social theorist James Coleman (Bezar et al. 2021) and Anthony Downs (Ogu 2013) have also been credited to have contributed to the development of the theory. The theory assumes that the way human beings behave is influenced by their preferences and constraints (Opp 2020). Thus, human beings may act by consciously weighing the pros and cons of available alternatives. In this case, human beings act with the sole aim of achieving ends that are in line with their hierarchy of preferences (Friedman and Hetcher 1988). Ogu (2013) also links RCT to “Collective action.” The author posits that in RCT, the individual is seen as rational, self-calculating, self-interested and self-maximizing and therefore, it is rare for the individual to participate in collective action or towards the good of the public unless the collective action or public good will eventually lead to the realization of their own interest. Notwithstanding, the author acknowledges that individuals are sometimes forced to engage in collective action that may not necessarily lead to the achievement of their personal interest but for the good of the public. In effect, individuals may sometimes be ordered by a government to participate in even risky PKMs like the Congo crisis in the 1960s, Liberian or Sierra Leonean wars for either the public good or internal political stability that has the intended results for regime survival.

It makes sense to argue that member nations voluntarily make the choice to support the activities of the UN and other regional bodies (in terms of security) by weighing the associated benefits and costs.

Research methods

This paper employed the qualitative research approach to conduct the study. It analyzed data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources involved interviews with personnel of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) who had practical peacekeeping experiences, personal observation, academics and official documents. Secondary sources included newspapers (the secondary content), internet sources, and reviews of academic and policy literature. The data were examined from the perspectives of neo-institutionalism, CS and RCT. The data from both the primary and secondary sources were coded and analyzed according to themes such as: PKOs and regime survival, PKMs and state peace and security, theory and Ghana’s support for UN PKOs. The thematic analytical approach was employed in the analysis. In all, 10 officers, ranging from the ranks of Major (three) to Lt. Colonel (Seven) were interviewed out of the 15 contacted through a very senior officer. Four of the

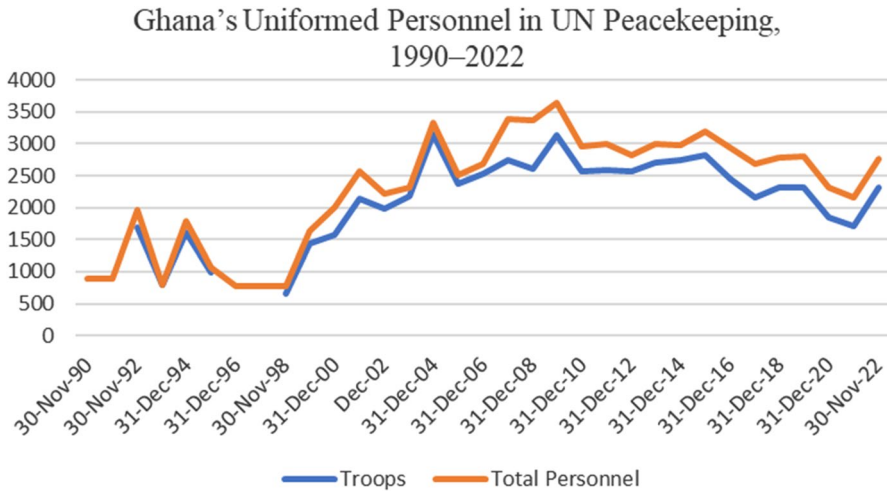


Fig. 1 Ghana's Uniformed Personnel in UN Peacekeeping, 1990–2022 Source: data compiled from United Nations Peacekeeping (2022). Troop and police contributors

five declined to participate in the interviews citing security concerns. This was in spite of consistent assurance of anonymity. One officer had travelled out of the country before the scheduled time. The officers were purposively selected based on their wealth of experience in PKMs; some were commanders of some the missions. Three (3) academics with security and international relations backgrounds were also interviewed. The interviews were conducted between July 2021 and January 2023. Issues of academic ethics and confidentiality were duly observed. The majority of the security personnel pleaded anonymity; for the sensitivity of the information gathered, those security officers who did not openly plead anonymity were also anonymized together with the academics to guarantee confidentiality.

Results and discussion

Ghana and the UN peacekeeping operations

Ghana, since its first UN PKM in 1960, “has been a beacon of peacekeeping around the world” (Frinjuah 2016, p. 1). This unflinching desire is guided by the commitment to promote peace and security all over the world (See Figs. 1, 2; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration 2019). This has often come at a cost to the nation. For example, on 28 April 1961, 43 Ghanaian UN peacekeepers were massacred by the Congolese Army in reaction to a threat that the UN would disband the Congolese Army if they did not stop their attacks on the Lulua tribe (Ghana Web, 2020). Despite the losses that are common in such operations, Ghanaian men and women have been involved in operations spanning the Sinai to the African continent, placing Ghana among the top ten and

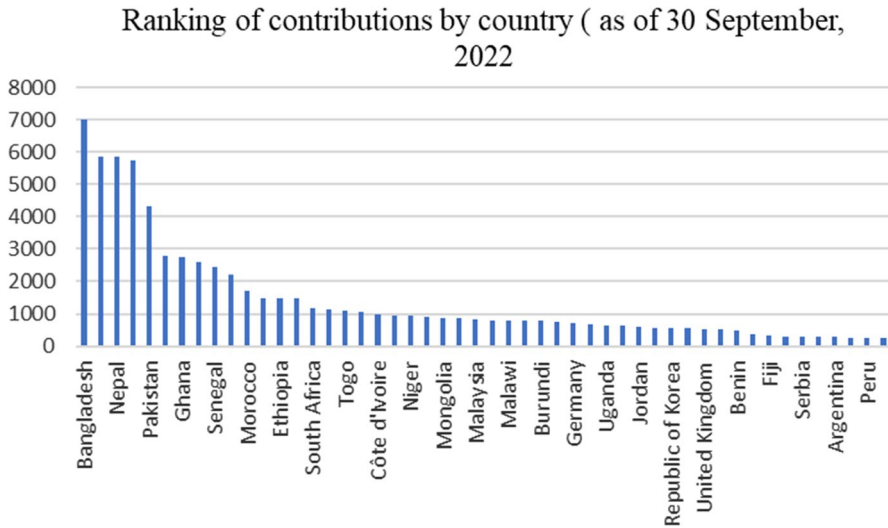


Fig. 2 Ranking of contributions by country (as of 30 September, 2022) Source: data compiled from United Nations Peacekeeping (2022). Troop and police contributors

making her a major and reliable contributor to UN peacekeeping (The Permanent Mission of Ghana to the UN 2021). Ghana has made contributions ranging from military, police, and civilian personnel to research and training targeted at improving the performance of peacekeepers involved in difficult and multifaceted missions (Aubyn and Aning 2013). To deepen the research and training aspect of its contribution to peacekeeping, Ghana established the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) to build on and share its five decades of peacekeeping expertise with the rest of the world, particularly Africa (Aubyn and Aning 2013).

General Emmanuel Wekem Kotia, the former Commander of the Western Sector in the UN PKM in the DRC (MONUSCO) and now head of academic training at the KAIPTC, notes:

Ghana's participation has been very tremendous so far as global peace is concerned. Our country, [he said], has served as a mentor to other countries in this field. We have gone on to establish the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, which serves as a global training center for various aspects of peacekeeping. Ghana is considered as a mentoring country (UN 2019).

Ruby Sandhu Rojon, UN Resident Representative in Ghana, for example, praised Ghana's assistance to the training of peacekeepers from other countries through the KAIPTC in Accra (Ghana's UN peacekeeping 2012). Also, H.E. Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces, President of the 73rd UN General Assembly lauded Ghana for supporting the UN in various areas for years (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, 2019). Again, H.E. Jean Pierre Lacroix, UN Under-Secretary-General for PKOs, praised Ghana and the KAIPTC for their priceless assistance to peacekeeping in Africa and around the world (KAIPTC 2019).

Typically, Ghanaian security personnel have engaged in different ways of ensuring peace and security, such as the methods of demining weapons built on the area of operation or in the country (e.g., UNMAS in South Sudan); ensuring peace through ceasefire monitoring (e.g., MONUC-1999) (See UNMAS 2021; MONUC 2021); patrolling to ensure peace in its peacekeeping missions and training host state forces (e.g., UNOCI—2004) (UN Peacekeeping 2021). These are supported by interviews with some Ghanaian military officers who participated in various PKMs in countries such as South Sudan, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and others. For instance, Lt Col 6 avers that:

Most areas of operations are very critical when there is a civil war between states and other neighboring borders... [for example] during the diffusing of an inbuilt bomb in South Sudan, although, Ghanaians were not part of the bomb squad, we were asked to supervise and ensure that civilians were safe and far from [the] danger zones (interviewed, 14 August 2021).

Major 3, who served in DR Congo, also adds: In (PKMs), we ensure and provide assistance to activities undertaken by Human Rights Sanctions in response to the violation of human rights; providing advice, strengthening of mechanism with the host government, national institutions, and the civil society (interviewed, 17 August, 2021).

Neo-institutionalism, collective security and Ghana’s participation in peace and security operations

The theories of neo-institutionalism, CS and RCT are again employed in the analysis of the data. Kwame Nkrumah, and the leaders following him endorsed liberal institutionalism and “collective security arrangement of the international system” (Agboka 2018, p. 43); again, it is believed that Ghana’s case reflects a rationalist approach to political and regime stability.

Under the auspices of the UN Security Council, Nkrumah sent Ghanaian troops to participate in the UN Congo PKO. Though this was not anything extraordinary, the mutiny that followed, and Nkrumah’s “anti-imperialist” and “Pan-African” posture created problems that would eventually lead to Nkrumah being ousted from power (Banini et al. 2020). As later developments showed, Nkrumah at the same time expected an outcome that would eventually see Congo join Ghana, Guinea and Mali Union as part of the African political unity agenda (Afrifa 1966). Ghana’s contingent sent to the Congo in July 1960, constituted about 30% of the UN peacekeepers (Afrifa 1966). Even though, Nkrumah joined the mission in the spirit of CS and neo-institutionalism and truly wished peace and stability for the Congo, his keen concerns were quite personal: Pan-African agenda, anti-imperialism and personal ambition of a United Africa.

The harbinger of military coups that followed Nkrumah’s overthrow (1966–1981) posed greatest challenge to Ghana’s political stability and adversely reduced civilian control of the military.

Given that existing scholarship and the very officers who were architects of the country’s maiden coup, claim the Congo experience might have contributed

Table 1 Ghana's participation in UN PKMs (since 1960)

Head of state	In power	Assumption of power	Number of PKM	Participation of Ghana	Participation of Ghana in Africa	Participation of Ghana in West Africa
Kwame Nkrumah	1960–1966	Democratically elected	5	2	–	–
Joseph Ankrab	1966–1969	Military coup	0	0	–	–
Akwasi Afrifa	1969–1970	Military coup	0	0	–	–
Edward Akufo-Addo	1970–1972	Democratically elected	0	0	–	–
Ignatius K. Acheampong	1971–1978	Military coup	2	1	–	–
Fred Akuffo	1978–1979	Military coup	1	1	–	–
Jerry John Rawlings	1979	Military coup	0	0	–	–
Hilla Limann	1979–1981	Democratically elected	1	1	–	–
Jerry John Rawlings	1981–2001a	Military coup/democratically elected	39	24	8	1
John Kufour	2001–2009	Democratically elected	11	9	8	4
John Atta Mills	2009–2012	Democratically elected	3	3	2	0
John Dramani Mahama	2012–2016	Democratically elected	5	3	3	1
Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo	From 2016 to September 2022	Democratically elected	8	3	2	1

Sources: United Nations Peacekeeping (2022). Troop and police contributors; *Prouza Jan and Horak Jakub (2015)*. Small but substantial: what drives Ghana's contributions to UN peacekeeping missions?

^aGhana's participation in Africa and West Africa under Jerry John Rawlings covers records from 1990 to 2001

to their actions, it is intriguing why successive regimes remained committed to PKMs (see Table 1). Suffice to say, there is more to it than cooperation hinged on institutional values and principles (that is, neo-institutionalism) and the spirit of CS. As demonstrated in Fig. 1 and Table 1, Ghana's contribution to either non-UN or UN PKMs has been consistent between 1974 and 2022, with gradual increment in the numbers. For instance, during the UNEF II mission, Ghana rotated circa 6,600 troops (Kotia 2015, p. 37). The Ghanaian peacekeepers were to oversee the truce between Egypt and Israel which ended the Yom Kippur War (Banini et al. 2020). Brigadier General Kotia (2015, p. 38) notes that the success of the Ghanaian troops in the UNEF II mission, "served as the beginning of the involvement of Ghanaian troops in future traditional peace operations resulting from inter-state conflict." Notably, during this operation, the country's political state was in disarray, but at least, it was spared of domestic pressures that those troops with their experiences might have added.

Between 1990–98, Ghana participated in the ECOWAS peacekeeping in Liberia (1990), UNTAC in Cambodia (1992), UNAMIR in Rwanda (1993) and UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone (1998). Ghana's contribution to the PKO by the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in 1990, was the second largest after Nigeria. Rawlings' action was motivated by concerns about the safety of Ghanaians resident in Liberia, reports of some Ghanaian dissenters joining the mutineers and the possible consequence for Ghana and his regime (Asamoah 2014). When asked whether peacekeeping is a form of maintaining regional and state peace and security, all 13 respondents, largely, answered in the affirmative.

Yes, I agree...., international and regional security is very key to every country. Should you encounter challenges in your country, security wise, your country alone might not be able to handle the situation, therefore, you are likely to invite other nationals in. When the regional body takes over, say ECOWAS, AU or UN, it means foreigners will be coming in so your commitment to their peace will determine how willing those governments will be to help you at [sic] time of need. (Lt. Col 3, interviewed: 3rd Jan. 2023).

In corroboration, Academic 3 asserts:

I agree. In fact, this is ... common sense. If you live in a region where it is destabilized, there is going to be a contingent effect on the government. I researched on Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone. I went to Liberia, ... one expert in the Liberian government told me that, 'look if we think that the problem in Liberia is a Liberian problem, then African leaders are joking because ...' using Ghana...an example.... (Interviewed: 6th Jan. 2023).

Akin to these concerns was the broader picture of an attempt by Rawlings to establish "his credentials as a regional leader and showing that Ghana was capable of operating on par with Nigeria in West Africa" (Shaw et al. 1996, p. 37). However, the fact that this was the first regional force to intervene in a PKM not under a UN mandate-mission coupled with concerns raised by Rawlings and the

swiftness with which he responded to the situation, it creates the impression that political stability in Ghana and the survival of the current regime were of prime importance to him. In order to avoid a repeat of the “Congo effect,” it was necessary to project a clear subregional goal of providing and guaranteeing regional security.

It is worth noting that at the backdrop of Rawlings’ keen commitment to PKOs, were huge economic and security setbacks. The economy of Ghana was on steep decline; draught had led to poor harvest resulting in starvation (especially in 1982/3); rising unemployment, soaring inflation—generating public estrangement for the regime (Brydon 1985, p. 570). These challenges together with the unpredictable behavior of the military at the time as well as Nigeria’s expulsion of circa, one million Ghanaians back home in 1983 (Brandful 2013), compounded the domestic political situation attracting several coup attempts, with two coup attempts in 1981 alone (Baynham 1985). In the face of those uncertainties, Rawlings, therefore, envisaged the engagement of the military in extensive international and multilateral PKMOs (Banini et al. 2020). A CIA report asserts that:

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 (CIA 1983, p. 3).

Thus, Rawlings’ major concern was about the military and incessant coups orchestrated by its rank and file since Nkrumah’s overthrow.

At the time when Rawlings had staged his first coup in 1983, the UNIFIL PKO in 1978 had almost come to an end. Given the political situation in Ghana, Emmanuel Erskine, the commander, sensing that relocating the “troops home might act as a catalyst for exacerbating the already difficult and uncertain situation” (Erskine 1989, p. 155), with UN consent, he reassigned them to the UNIFIL PKM in Lebanon. As observed by Clune (2016, p. 14), both the regime and the military perceived the country’s involvement in UN PKMs as a “relief valve for the deadlock in the Ghana Armed Forces.” In other words, PKM provided a window to keep the contingent “on track,” and alienated from possible internal seditions (Aning 2007). Rawlings regime effectively utilized PKM to continuously engage the army and distract its focus and involvement in domestic political matters (Olonisakin 2000). However, responding to the question on whether peacekeeping mission is a coup prevention mechanism, both the academics and the officers give varying answers, with the majority giving indication to its possibility. Lt. Col 1, for instance makes an interesting revelation hinting on the possible rational choice objective of PKOs. He intimates:

...the deleterious effect of the civil war in Liberia; to the extent that they destroyed everything in the country, including electricity poles... the whole country, there was no electricity anywhere...they destroyed everything to the extent of collapsing all their hospitals... The same thing happened in Sierra Leone, Cote D’Ivoire, and then Western Sahara. So, when soldiers participate in peacekeeping, they get to know the negative effects of war. As a result of

that they don't wish that such [a] thing happens in their country. So, anything that will lead to civil war ... anything like coup, they try to avoid it... So, it means that even though it might not be the direct reason, somehow it has that effect sort of (Interviewed, 3rd January 2023).

Even though, it is unclear whether Rawlings' keen enthusiasm in PKM was in response to the post-cold war global security concerns or an act hinged on a vigilant political contemplation, Berry (1995) asserts that the regime may have utilized the operations for political prudence. The fact that the regime initially defied the demand by the IMF to be measured with its military expenditure, is an indication of the importance of these missions to the regime (Berry 1995). Rawlings' effective and "subjective" handling of the forces coupled with other "control mechanisms" (possibly through PKMs), enabled the regime to quench the endemic hunger for coups and helped to secure Ghana's "political space for more enduring and institutionalized forms of political control" of the country's forces (Hutchful 2008, pp. 127–128). The application of the principles of CS and neo-institutionalism, thus, afforded the regime some political leverage and security.

Some also believe that it depends particularly on whether the country in question is a developing country or an advanced one. To them, most developing countries have economic and financial crisis which make the countries vulnerable to political instability, leading to issues of survival and legitimacy. Thus, bettering the lot of officers is likely to make them happy and accept or be loyal to that regime.

It depends on the country. In a developing country like Ghana where most of the institutions are in bed with the government, it is possible because the government knows very well that they are not ruling the country very well. They know very well that things are expensive, and they are also corrupt. They know ...the only people who can do something to them is the military, so they make them happy. In developed countries, institutions serve the state but in developing countries institutions serve the government.... (Academic 3, interviewed: 6th Jan. 2023).

In corroboration, Lt Col 5 though disagrees in principle regarding the issue of recognition by the security institutions, he concedes that to a large extent it ensures conducive political atmosphere for the regime in power.

... It is not the duty of the armed forces and other security agencies to give legitimacy to a government...But to some extent, in terms of providing a serene atmosphere for the government, devoid of any threat of instability, I may, to some extent, agree. It makes the threat of instability non-existent. There is a saying in the military that... 'a soldier walks on his stomach.' ... when a soldier is deployed, whiles [sic] they are making their money and feeling comfortable, they are less likely to be inclined to get involved in acts of instability (Interviewed: 3rd Jan. 2023)

Though, PKMs endangered the troops sometimes, their grievances were eased through diverse mechanisms. Unlike the Congo incident, the severe perilous of the Liberian war, for example, was perceived as strictly pertinent to the West African

sub-regional security (largely) and the security of Ghana in particular. Thus, working through the opportunities provided by PKOs (sanctioned by the principles of CS and neo-institutionalism), the regime was able to, to a large extent, divert the attention of the military from domestic political affairs and secured the political sanity of the country until the Fourth Republic (this dovetail with the rational choice argument). It is not surprising that subsequent regimes have continued on the same tangent (see Table 1).

Interestingly, the apprehension about the loyalty and professionalism of the military continued during particularly J.A Kufuor's tenure. The reasons for this are not far-fetched. Given that the regime had just inherited the political office from a "coup-turned civilian regime" with so much uncertainty, Rawlings's firm control of the military coupled with his almost two decades reign was enough ground for the new regime's security concerns. The attempt to further reform the military also had its own implications as agitations and grievances by soldiers who might not find the changes favorable were eminent. Kufuor, however, did not relent on effecting the necessary changes (Aning 2001), hence the appointment of his biological brother, Addo Kufuor as defense minister. This decision by the President had been interpreted as his way of closely monitoring the military, especially because of lack of trust in the loyalty of the army (Mills and Handley 2001). Notably, while the Academics largely agree on the correlation between regime survival and institutional recognition and bettering the lives of officers through PKMs, the officers seem to have divergent views. About half of them are uncertain about the situation, even though they, to a large extent, admit the general happiness that comes with good conditions of service. Lt. Col 4, for instance has this to say:

Not at all. Let me give NPP as an example. They are in power now. Before they came, peacekeeping was in existence... But you see when governments come, they will want to kind of endure themselves to the military and in so doing they may want to make life comfortable for us. And by way of making life comfortable for us in relation to economic situation among others, the government may decide to review the allowance they pay to peacekeeping personnel upwards, and once that is done, we will be happy and we will be singing the praises of the government. This government came and our allowances have been increased... that is just that (Interviewed, 20th Jan. 2023).

The new regime also carefully exploited PKM as a tool for securing the regime's survival and limiting the possibility of another coup. The administration split and redeployed the "Forces Reserve Battalion," also known as the "Commandos" (African Confidential 2001). The "Commandos" were perceived as the most loyal to the Rawlings regime, and perhaps, the most feared. Their very presence was seen as posing a serious security threat to the regime's survival (Banini et al. 2020). Kufuor's government, therefore, redeployed a number of the "Commandos" on several PKOs, while reassigning others to different units of the Ghana Armed Forces. Gbevlo-Lartey, the commander of the "Commandos," for example, was posted to the Armed Forces Staff College and later redeployed on a PKM before his retirement in August 2003 upon "an alleged coup plot" (Banini et al. 2020, p. 246; GhanaWeb 2003). Akin to this was the retirement of more than 2000 non-commissioned officers

(NCOs) (GhanaWeb 2003), which made it possible for the regime to fill about 25 percent of vacancies in the military.

Ghana's participation in the civil wars of Liberia and political uprisings in Togo and Cote d'Ivoire in 2002 and 2010 were incentivized by the urgent need to avert a potential regional crisis, with possible spill-over of refugees and encouragement for military-engineered political instability. Both regime survival and political stability were significant factors. The Ivorian case, for example, though sanctioned by UN (UNOCI) and as part of ECOWAS arrangement, the principles of institutionalism and collective security only served to achieve the national and regime's interest—it was more of a rational decision. It is not surprising for all the officers to agree to state security and peace, while five partly agree to regime survival. The academics assert strongly the fear of spill-over of political instability and possible regime change as the situation could serve as an incentive.

I think is more likely to maintain regional stability and the state security is also interlinked. You know, in international conflicts there is a possibility of conflict escalating and affecting neighboring countries or destabilizing the whole region so if countries send troops for peacekeeping especially in the neighborhood, first of all, it will be for the regional stability but once there is stability in the region, it is likely to also benefit the home country (Academic 1, interviewed: 12 Jan, 2023).

Lt. Col 5 also has this to say:

I strongly agree to that... You see we soldiers who have seen what conflicts have done to other countries where we were deployed, for example, I have personally been to Congo, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and other places. Soldiers have seen the devastating effects of conflicts to [sic] other countries based on what we see [we] believe that such thing should never happen to our own country... so, there is that inward and general feeling among personnel the need to maintain peace and security in our own country....

Rational choice theory and Ghana's support for UN peacekeeping operations

To the extent that both military and democratic regimes have shown keen commitment to UN security operations, both regimes have additional objectives beyond the professional skills and training for the contingent, monetary benefits for the personnel and equipment acquisition. However, such intended or possible objective is an end goal that needs a means to achieve it. The utility of neo-institutionalism and collective security, therefore, serves as the springboard to further guarantee not only regional and domestic security but also the survival of the regime in power.

Realists argue that partaking in PKOs tends to serve the national interests of participating states' anticipated status in the global system (Neack 1995). There is a third interest which is more related to internal security, peace and acceptance of the regime in power, especially by the security institutions. Notably, political instability, often culminating in military coups and toppling of incumbent governments in most African states have been led by the security forces (Mwai 2022). The continent

is rife with conditions that make the states susceptible to coups: poverty, bad economic performance, high rate of unemployment, tribalism, ethnicism and corruption. Africa recorded 13 of the 14 coups recorded globally since 2017 (Mwai 2022). Ghana has experienced a number of coups, with eight in 20 years since 1966 when the first coup took place. Sovereign states in Africa “have experienced over 200 coup attempts since 1950, of which over 100 have succeeded” (Powell et al. 2022).

In order to eschew any apprehension or dissatisfaction among the forces, governments have eagerly promoted their participation in such PKOs as first a means of bettering their lots, second, to offer the troops the opportunity to develop professionally, learning about the true obligation and duties of an officer. In the opinion of Lt. Col 1:

.... the deleterious effect of the civil war in Liberia; to the extent that they destroyed everything in the country, including electricity poles ...their hospitals. So, it was the donor countries that brought some of the hospital ships like ‘Mercy Ship’, that was assisting [even] the civilians in the war zone. So, you could realize that the effect of war is so disastrous that no soldier wishes that thing happens to his country, particularly those of us from... Ghana who participated in those peacekeeping mission... (Interviewed, 3rd Jan. 2023)

In this case, the desire to stage military coups or even foment trouble over public and/or intra-forces apprehension is less. For example, Ghana was compensated with an amount of \$74,336,121.42 in 2010 for its contributions to peace missions (cited in Aning and Aubyn 2013, p. 276). Its expenditure, however, was \$42,100,576.47, thus, the country received \$32,235,544.95 in excess (Aning and Aubyn 2013). Between 1998 and 1999, a similar offshoot from the “Ghana Armed Forces” (\$2,450,000) was allegedly utilized to purchase “a Gulf Stream Gill aircraft for the presidency” (Aning and Aubyn 2013, p. 276). Ghana currently, gives the peacekeepers a remuneration of between US\$30 and \$35 (Banini et al. 2020, p. 250). Thus, Ghanaian peacekeeping officers have access to almost 85% of the monthly compensation allocations for PKM officers, which is comparatively higher than what is paid to peacekeepers from other countries in West Africa (Banini et al. 2020, p. 250) and Africa as a whole.

In effect, the political leaders are rather resorting to rational choices and decisions, except that the theoretical levers are neo-institutionalism and collective security. Again, once a government participates in such PKOs, the general assumption is that the regime is accepted even if illegitimate, and thus, toppling such a regime will be tantamount to usurpation and becoming unpopular. This, however, does not necessarily negate the occurrence of coups, but at least, it affords the regime some recognition and hope against unpopular uprisings. In responding to whether participation in PKMs has any correlation with international legitimacy, Academics 1 and 3 answered in the negative; seven of the officers answered in the affirmative, while two are of the opinion that it is a possibility. One officer clearly misunderstood the question.

That theoretically might be true ... If you consider Rawling’s military regime, then in that instance they may want to contribute soldiers to more or

less [win]... the international community but that is just within the realm of possibility... (Academic 1, interviewed: 12th Jan. 2023).

In contrast, Academic 2 argues that:

Sure... one secret behind peacekeeping operations is to have that kind of influence in international community... if you always stay within your own jurisdiction, who knows you? ...[PKO] exposes the country in question so you gain that kind of legitimacy in the international community as a country or even regime. It makes you legitimate.... (Interviewed, 20th Jan. 2023)

In corroboration to Academic 2's observation, Lt Col 4 states:

Yes, because states do not live in isolation, especially in this era of globalization. States depend on each other for survival and so when we meet at that level and there are issues... They will begin to say, oh, Ghana is a very responsible country is not like they have sat and folded their arms. They are interested in global peace and so you start getting the recognition and respect from other countries... countries like the US and UK ...are powerful because they have shown interest in global matters... at that level when they meet and you also become friends with them, they start recognizing you and it becomes global recognition and eventually you legitimize your regime.... (Interviewed, 20th Jan. 2023)

Thus, the majority of the respondents believe that international recognition is important to the regime. Being recognized internationally has the potential to guarantee some reluctance on the part of especially the great powers in supporting unpopular uprisings against the regime in power—this, thus supports the possible rational choice objective. Notably, both Academic 1 and Academic 3, are however, of the opinion that peacekeeping, international recognition and regime legitimacy could have some links—even if they are not emphatic.

Given the economic quagmires coupled with rumors of coups and a number of failed coup attempts during Rawlings' military rule, that Ghana increased its contribution significantly, participating in 24 out of 39 PKMs—all together during his stay in power, and the rampancy of military coups that had rocked the nation since the mid-1960s becoming a thing of the past in two decades is a great justification for deliberate application of the assumptions of RCT. On whether regimes' participation in PKOs is driving by RCT (that is as coup aversion, survival of regime, international legitimacy and state peace and security), both the academics and the officers give varying answers. For example, in responding to the question on whether peacekeeping mission is a coup prevention mechanism, Academic 1 believes it is "possible;" Academic 2 believes it is a "no," though, it could be a factor; while Academic 3 is of the view that it could be "yes" or "no." while all three Majors believe that might not be a priority, six Lt. Colonels believe it could be a possible objective. Three out of the six actually used the term "possible." In effect, the majority of the respondents give an indication to the possibility of using PKMs as tools for discouraging coups. This corroborates

Aubyn et al. (2019) and Agyekum's (2020) assertion that UN PKMs have helped countered the "coup-making mentality" particularly among the armed forces.

According to Academic 1:

It is possible if that particular regime is not very stable, if there are so many problems or challenges that may warrant a coup and the government is fearing that the soldiers may want to lead a coup then the government may want to send some of them abroad but normally I don't think that will be a priority in the current system (in the eight session of the Fourth Republic, 2023)... because we have come to consolidate our democracy.... (Interviewed: 12th Jan. 2023).

RCT asserts that individuals act rationally and make efforts to optimize their gains. Hence, leaders tend to contribute troops given the economic and political benefits that accrue from participating in the missions. Also, the competitiveness and desire of many officers to participate in such missions is a clear indication that the individual officers see such missions as great opportunities to better their lots as well as their professional advancement. In reaction to this, except Academic 2, who casts a slur on the fairness of the process, all the officers and the academics affirm the competitiveness of the process as well as the joy that the benefits yield.

Absolutely... those two things (professional training and financial benefits) are the main motivating factors for the soldiers personally. They may want to participate in peacekeeping missions because of course when they go, they bring some money back that helps them to complete some projects. If you interact with some of them, they will tell you that if not the fact that I went for peacekeeping abroad, I probably would not have been able to buy this property. ... They go for these missions to get some additional money and bring back home so it is certainly the case that they may want to go for peacekeeping to enhance their professional life, make more connections and get more money (Academic 1, interviewed: 12th Jan. 2023).

Lt. Col 5 also adds that:

I say it is hundred percent. ...the economic benefits take eighty percent of the reasons why we want to go into peacekeeping operations. Economic benefit to the armed forces is a major issue. The money is not much but that is the only place we can also go and come and buy a plot of land or a small car... So, most of the projects that many soldiers have been able to do, put up a chamber and hall, buy a car or anything beneficial, eighty percent of it, ...comes from what we get from peacekeeping operations....it is highly competitive because you are put on the same scale with other officers across the world.... (3rd Jan. 2023)

Encouraging and sanctioning such operations will therefore be considered by the state as providing and satisfying the desires of the security personnel and thus, limiting the rise of dissatisfaction among them, which could lead to coups or political apprehensions. Since its first PKO participation in the 1960s, Ghana has

shown consistent contribution to the missions. As indicated in Fig. 1, from the initial number of 770 in 1960, it now contributes an average number of 2,500 personnel to UN PKOs and it is ranked the seventh highest contributor to UN PKO (as of September, 2022) (see Fig. 2; United Nations Peacekeeping 2022).

It is in the interest of the Government of Ghana to preserve security and stability domestically; however, the security of West Africa and the African continent is very vital in achieving and sustaining stability in the country. RCT contends that in such a situation the choice to participate is hinged on a rational option rather than institutional values. Suffice to say that the application of CS and neo-functionalism serves as a means to achieve a rational goal. Even though, on the surface, the maintenance of stability in the subregion seems to be the cardinal stirring factor for the country's participation in UN PKOs, the eagerness to intercede surges together with the level of threat within the context of the "regional security complex," and thus, serves to help avert domestic threat as well. It is not surprising that all 13 respondents agree to the sanctioning of peacekeeping as a form of maintaining regional and state peace and security. They believe the two are interlinked as regional instability has a spill-over effect.

...the intention of peacekeeping is just to maintain the peace and security of the region and the sub-region... I cited Rawlings launching us into ECOMOG - Liberia; ...Sierra Leone, ...when it starts from country A, it can extend to country B. Because for instance, what started... in Rwanda extended to Burundi. ...it was coming [sic] to Uganda, because ...of the Tutsis and the Hutus (in both countries)... then it moved to Cote D'Ivoire. And you know, we have some Akans in Cote D'Ivoire... So the issue of the subregion and the domestic stability are both important, very important... So, if maybe there is economic hardship, there is malfeasance, there is corruption and other things in country A and then they are fighting over those things, and the same thing is happening in country B, the possibility of the citizens of country B to also start fighting or agitating is very high.... (Lt. Col 1, interviewed: 3rd Jan. 2023).

In a similar view, Academic 1 asserts that:

I think it is more likely to maintain regional stability and the state security is also interlinked... Let's take the Arab Spring as an example. Just one issue happened to sweep across the whole region... So, it is very possible that sending soldiers for peacekeeping will have a double effect of ensuring regional and domestic stability... again, ...when we have instability in a region, there will be export of refugees and they... may also come to place a lot of demand on local resources and once those pressures arise, it can lead to something else. So, it makes sense to send soldiers for peacekeeping, especially in the neighborhood because once there is regional stability, you are also protected. (12th Jan. 2023)

Interestingly, three officers (Lt. Col 4, Lt. Col 1 and Major 2 (interviewed, 20 July, 2021) reveal that some officers are hesitant to go for PKMs if the risks are

high. Thus, despite the competitiveness and attraction, officers may attempt to abstain if the situation is that perilous. However, such officers if caught are punished severely, including firing squad. This is buttressed by Lt. Col 1, thus:

... it becomes very competitive. But at the same time too, people don't want to go to certain areas where the risk is very high... So, for instance, ...the risk in Mali is very high... they are always bombing and 'shelling' the UN places, people are dying there. So ...that situation, troops don't want to go... the moment you hit 35, 40, and you realize that you have a wife, you have children... For instance, the Gambian issue ... We applied force on some of the soldiers...Because if you don't go ...we will ... court martial you, and ...the result is ...firing squad... (Interviewed: 3rd Jan. 2023).

Banini et al. (2020) contend that Ghana's participation is hinged on two "motives." One is shared cultural affinities with its neighbors and the fear of conflict spillover inspire Ghana to commit troops (Aning and Aubyn 2013). Citing the Liberian civil war, the political crisis in Togo and Cote d'Ivoire as culminating in possible spillovers, he adds, thus, the need to prevent them from relapsing into a more vital regional crisis. Another is the motivation by the obligation to assist in maintaining global peace and security as enshrined in the UN Charter. Thus, PKM offers Ghana the opportunity to "demonstrate its influence in world affairs and enhance its image and prestige in the international system" (Aning and Aubyn 2013, p. 275). However, the implicit implication is that the CS approach has provided a chance for the realization of a rational objective of securing domestic security and stability. For example, following from Rawlings' PKM example, and the polarity of the military at the time, especially relating to the loyalty of armed men who had been under the rule of a military-turned-civilian regime coupled with massive transformation of the military (for example, the establishment of the so-called 64-Battalion, also known as the "Commandos"), President J. A. Kufour introduced massive new reforms. This included disbanding the Rawlings' "Commandos" and deploying a number of them on PKMs (including their commander, Gbevlo-Lartey), retiring over 2000 NCOs and replacing them with, perhaps those more loyal to the new regime. According to Prouza and Horak (2015), Ghana participated in nine out of 11 PKMs. Kufour also increased their peacekeepers' daily compensations from US\$16 to US\$27; Mills to \$30; Nana Addo Dankwa to \$35 (Daily Graphic 2017; Banini et al. 2020). Just like the previous regimes, Kufour, Mills, Mahama and Akufo-Addo employed the military shakeup and better conditions of service, including better PKM logistics and remuneration (especially, Kufour and Akufo-Addo) to strengthen their hold over the forces, to eschew a repeat of what befell the Busia regime (1972) and Limann's (1981) (Aning 2001; Banini et al. 2020) as well as those before them.

Even though, on the surface, the maintenance of stability in the subregion seems to be the cardinal stirring factor for the country's participation in UN PKOs, the overarching goal is premised on a rational decision than CS and/or neo-institutionalism. Importantly, both "country-specific and large-N analyses" suggest some link between contributions to PKMs and attempts to reduce soldiers' grievances and potential mutiny (Williams 2018, cited in Banini et al. 2020, p. 239). This is accentuated by most of the respondents. Academic 3 observes, for example that:

... In Ghana, literature says that by sending peacekeepers it enhances democracy. It helped us to gradually transit from the military regime into civil government. Even, it is not only JJ Rawlings... President Kufour also used peacekeeping to stabilize his government and to have a better democracy as we are enjoying today... I think that... he saw internal security issues to be more of a threat than peacekeeping. This guy, Gbevlo Larteh was one of the threatening guys at that time, and he sent him out for peacekeeping. So, we can say that he used peacekeeping alright (Interviewed, 6th Jan. 2023).

In support of this, Academic 1 also opines:

You know the public sector wage is not really that much and no public sector worker in Ghana is earning a desirable income and so if there is an opportunity to add something from another place especially if it is legal—and soldiers are not any different. They go for these missions to get some additional money and bring back home so it is certainly the case that they may want to go for peacekeeping to enhance their professional life, make more connections and get more money. (Interviewed, 12th Jan, 2023)

Lt. Col 1 also reveals:

Some of the missions, they pay them 150 dollars per day. That is when the risk is very high. And some of them it is 115... and some of them 120—like Sudan and Somalia, it is between 120 and 130. And then the lowest is Western Sahara, which was 85. So at least, when you go for one year and you come, you may have at least not less than about 30,000 dollars in your hands... you can ... if nothing at all, buy a house—... or build some 3-bedroom... So, because of this everybody wants to participate, for the economic benefits.... (Interviewed, 3 January 2023)

Academic 3, again, states:

...I think JJ took advantage of that (the Cold War and the political instability and economic hardship at home) to use peacekeeping... Erskine [a Ghanaian UN Force Commander in Lebanon]... was saying that when they finished one peacekeeping and the peacekeepers were disbanded to come back home, Ghana arranged and went to another country, I think Lebanon. So, I think JJ played his cards well.

The fact that the majority of the respondents see a possibility in the use of PKMs as having direct or indirect impact on the actions of the regime is a great indication of the final goal of their utility to the political leaders. It is therefore not surprising that in responding to the question on whether peacekeeping missions help with regime survival and recognition by the security institutions, two of the respondents strongly agree to that; five believe it is a possibility; five disagree (on the second part—recognition by the security institutions), while one respondent preferred to remain neutral—not sure whether it is the case or not. Interestingly, those who strongly agree to this include some of the respondents who do not subscribe to the notion that PKMs

are employed by Ghanaian governments as coup diversionary mechanisms. Academic 2, for instance, asserts:

This boils down to the issue of finance. A hungry military man will obviously consider toppling the regime in power. But If I get the chance to embark on peacekeeping, obviously, I will get money and the regime that gave me the opportunity, I will be very happy with them. That is why if you do recall, during president Kufour's time, his brother Dr. Addo Kufour did everything possible to make the military very happy, including peacekeeping operations... Well, we are not saying that there wouldn't be a coup, but if our men in uniform are happy, why will they think about a coup.... (Interviewed: 20th Jan. 2023)

Conclusion

This paper revisited the roles played by Ghanaian security personnel with the United Nations in the field of operations with emphasis on the motivations for Ghana's keen contribution to the supranational body, especially in the area of security. Notably, Ghana's contribution to security in Africa has, since Nkrumah's era, almost always occurred under the auspices of regional and international bodies such as the AU, ECOWAS and the UN—a grave manifestation of new-institutionalism and collective security approaches. This is necessary to eschew any unwarranted aftermath reprisals from belligerent parties.

However, both CS and neo-institutionalism are deemed tools for achieving an intended objective of securing internal political stability and thus guaranteeing the survival of the regime in power. Therefore, CS and neo-institutionalism are arguably employed as means to pursue a rational objective. While respondents give divergent views on this conclusion, the majority of them believe there is either direct or possible rational choice goal driving Ghana's consistent participation in PKMs. On whether regimes' participation in PKOs is driven by RCT (that is, as coup aversion, regime survival, international legitimacy and state peace and security), the majority of the respondents largely answered in the affirmative. In effect, the majority of the respondents give an indication to the possible objective of using PKMs as tools for discouraging coups. All 13 respondents largely answered in the affirmative regarding the theme of PKM as a form of maintaining regional and state peace and security.

Though it is generally believed the selection process is competitive, some respondents, especially the academics doubt it is always the case, citing the possibility of nepotism and corruption.

Notably, while the Academics largely agree on the correlation between regime survival in particular and bettering the lives of officers through PKMs, the officers seem to have divergent views. None of the officers subscribe to the second part of theme—"recognition by security institutions." Five of the officers partly agree to regime survival. While the academics assert strongly the fear of spill-over of political instability and possible regime change as the situation could serve as an

incentive. However, this gives credence to the rational choice theorists' argument that essentially political leaders make choices based on their rational objectives, which primarily is to safeguard their regimes.

Indeed, it is revealing that the military do not believe so much in the employment of PKOs as coup aversion mechanism even though they do highly subscribe to other variables such as regime survival, international recognition and legitimacy and state peace and security as important motivations. It is also intriguing to note that contrary to public notion of the officers scrambling for PK opportunities there are times that they actually shun them and even make up excuses to be exempted particularly where the operations are deemed to be of high risk.

Essentially, Ghanaian governments have employed the PKMs as means to divert attention and to fortify their regimes. Therefore, the UN should endeavor to streamline PKOs to ensure domestic political stability as well as to discourage illegitimate regimes from taking undue advantage of the missions. Considering the policy implications of Ghana's continuous participation in UN PKOs, which includes, but not limited to financial and logistical constraints towards training and capacity building of personnel, balancing national security with peacekeeping commitments, and issues of human right abuses by personnel, Ghana must develop a comprehensive policy strategy that addresses these challenges. More importantly, Ghana must ensure that its continuous commitment to peacekeeping operations does not jeopardize its national security and domestic priorities. Also, strenuous efforts must be made to enhance the training and capacity of personnel to eschew acts of human right abuses and unprofessionalism that tarnish the image of the country whilst giving attention to gender balancing in the deployment of troops.

Where certain circumstances delay payment of allowances, PKOs can in themselves provide the incentive for agitations among the troops and thus, likely result in mutiny. A corrupt government might also abuse PKOs by sending away high- and low-ranking officers considered potential threats to the regime and thus silence any formidable opposition to the regime. Economically, where shortage of funds makes it difficult for the UN to reimburse countries that commit to PKOs, resource constraints might affect the domestic economy, which could have spill-over effect on the private sector and thus affect employment rate. Clear policy guidelines should therefore be put in place to guide Ghana's participation in such operations.

Notably, future studies are likely to face the issue of "uncertainty" regarding where to start from as the phenomenon is widespread and full of complexities. Each case might have its own unique causes, posing a problem for generalisation.

Author contributions Each author revised and edited the work. IN: conceived the idea (title), wrote the abstract, introduction, and conclusion. MO-A: wrote the theory, contributed to data gathering, and shared the analysis sections (all other subheadings) with IN. Both authors read and approved the final draft for publication.

Funding No funding was received to assist with the preparation of this manuscript.

Data availability The authors used data from the UN supported by information from other sources, which were all dully referenced. Sources and links to the datasets are stated below: United Nations Peacekeeping (2022). Troop and police contributors—Available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors> (Accessed 15 March 2022). Nunoo, Isaac (2023), "Ghana's contribution to UN peacekeeping

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Declarations

Conflict of interest There is nothing to declare.

Ethical approval The authors breached no ethical requirements. It was also done in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. The University of Cape Coast Research Ethics Committee has confirmed that no ethical approval is required as this study does not involve the university population or fall under the category of thesis/dissertation.

Informed consent All individuals involved in the study gave their consent for the interview.

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