Peacekeeping Experiences as Triggers of Introspection in the Ghanaian Military Barracks

Agyekum, Humphrey Asamoah

Peacekeeping Experiences as Triggers of Introspection in the Ghanaian Military Barracks

Humphrey Asamoah Agyekum[1]

Abstract

African political elites have been forthcoming with military support for United Nations peacekeeping missions, contributing substantially to these missions' workforce. Despite their contribution, most studies on peacekeeping omit the African soldier's voice on his experiences of the African war theatre. This article features Ghanaian soldiers' narratives based on their peacekeeping deployments and illuminates how Ghanaian peacekeepers connect their experiences to their home society. In this contribution, I illustrate how Ghanaian soldiers' narratives about peacekeeping experiences are framed as deterring examples for their home society, thus potentially impacting their actions and behaviours. Based on long-term qualitative research embedded with the Ghanaian military, drawing from interviews and informal conversations with peacekeeping veterans and serving military operatives, it is argued that Ghanaian soldiers' narratives of peacekeeping experiences and the collective processes through which these narratives gain currency in the barracks and beyond are informed by introspection in the post-peacekeeping deployment phase.

[1]Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Corresponding Author:
Humphrey Asamoah Agyekum, Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Øster Farimagsgade 5, DK-1353 Copenhagen K, Kobenhavn 1017, Denmark.
Email: haa@ifs.ku.dk

Introduction

Since its first deployment of troops to the United Nations (UN) operation in Congo (ONUC) in 1960 (Providing for Peacekeeping, 2018), Ghana has been a regular feature in the international peacekeeping arena (Malan, 1999). Peacekeeping is commonly described as a conflict resolution instrument that is mainly deployed by the UN to promote peaceful settlement of armed conflicts (Goulding, 1993; Pouligny, 2006; Rubinstein, 1998). In the past six decades, Ghana has participated in more than thirty of such UN missions (Olonisakin, 1997), contributing more than 83,000 military and police personnel (Providing for Peacekeeping, 2018).[1] As a result of Ghana's extensive involvement in peacekeeping missions, the West African country has evolved into a top ten troop contributor that ships out eleven battalions[2] annually to missions across the globe. Peacekeeping deployments have become an identity marker in the Ghanaian military barracks as Ghanaian soldiers see themselves as "peace soldiers" (Cunliffe, 2013).

While much is known about the institutions and operations in the peacekeeping arenas, the post-deployment aspect of peacekeeping missions remains under-analysed in the literature. The article contributes a post-deployment perspective to the extensive body of literature on peacekeeping by exploring how Ghanaian peacekeepers make sense of their experiences and observations in the conflict zone. The article shows how Ghanaian soldiers upon return to the safety and relative quiet of the barracks introspect on these experiences and observations, and translate these into narratives that are shared with others. I deploy the concept of introspection to explain how Ghanaian soldiers' form narratives that are informed by the observations and perceptions of the peacekeeping experience.

In the extensive and multifaceted body of literature on peacekeeping missions, studies have generated thought-provoking insights on varied interdisciplinary issues. Fortna and Howard (2008: 284) note that the literature on peacekeeping can be divided into three waves. The first wave of scholarship featured deployments during the Cold War era, while the second group of literature focused on newfound interest in peacekeeping in the 1990s, which quickly turned to feature "failure, dysfunction, and unintended consequences" (ibid.). The third wave of scholarship featured systematic qualitative and quantitative studies that empirically scrutinised the impact of peacekeeping, concluding that "despite its limitations, peacekeeping is an extremely effective tool" (ibid.). The article interrogates the idea of unintended consequences of peacekeeping, arguing that Ghanaian soldiers' perceptions, views, and experiences of the peacekeeping arena may have unintended effects on the home society. In line with the third wave of scholarship on peacekeeping, the article then presents a systematic, empirical examination of the impact of peacekeeping on Ghanaian soldiers in the barracks in the post-peacekeeping deployment phase.

The broad literature of peacekeeping has followed the institution's ups and down (Fortna and Howard, 2008: 284). In the period between 1948 and 1978, the UN fielded thirteen missions, while between 1978 and 1987 no new missions were initiated, but from 1988 to 1993 a staggering twenty missions were launched (ibid.).With the boom and bust of UN missions came the wide variety of themes featured in the literature,

ranging from, among others, the evolution of peacekeeping operations (Goulding, 1993), the crisis of UN peacekeeping (Roberts, 1994), the peacekeeping space (Higate and Henry, 2010), or the peacekeeping economy (Henry, 2015), in which peacekeepers engaged in sexual exploitation of girls and women (Jennings, 2010), but also initiated economic activities making them interested in the prolongation of the conflict (Aning and Edu-Afful, 2013). Finally, in view of the changing nature of peacekeeping, there have also been numerous studies on the effects of peacekeeping on soldiers' medical and psychological well-being (Bartone et al., 1998; Shigemura and Nomura, 2002).

Recently, the changing nature of conflict and its implications for peacekeeping mandates have gained traction in the scholarship. In the past, most peacekeeping operations had a so-called chapter VI mandate, which entails settling disputes via peaceful means, such as diplomacy, negotiation, and mediation. However, Karlsrud, among others, notes that due to the asymmetric nature of modern conflicts, there is increasingly a demand for missions with chapter VII mandates (Karlsrud, 2015: 42; Williams, 2013), that is, for peace enforcement which permits the use of lethal force to enforce peace.

Apart from demands for more proactive UN mandates, another prominent feature in the recent literature is peacekeeping's unintended consequences. Scholars such as Dwyer (2015), Wilén (2012), Aning et al. (2013), and Jennings (2010) have highlighted the unforeseen consequences and outcomes of peacekeeping mandates not only on troop-contributing militaries and nations but also on the receiving country. Wilén, citing Burundi as an example, notes that overlooking soldiers for selection for lucrative peacekeeping operations and highly valued international training opportunities could not only create tensions within the barracks of the troop-contributing nation but also dissatisfied soldiers could become spoilers in the peace processes (Wilén, 2016).

Dwyer (2015) has convincingly argued against the instrumental use of African troops – that is, peacekeeping postings as means of eliminating troublesome units and officers. Deploying such officers and units on peacekeeping missions could trigger mutinies and coups, because soldiers "who are already weary of the government or military hierarchy may become further discontent by unfulfilled expectations from the mission," (Dwyer, 2015: 222) prompting returning peacekeepers to rebel against their home government or military hierarchy (Dwyer, 2015; Wilén, 2012).

Furthermore, African troops are involved in some of the most volatile and dangerous missions in the world (Dwyer, 2015: 224). These dangerous conditions may aggravate existing tensions in their own barracks (ibid.). For instance, the risk of deployment may intensify grievances over equipment, training, and leadership, while the hardships and physical danger associated with peacekeeping postings may provoke an extra sense of entitlement by soldiers and generate a sense of injustice among peacekeepers, or amplify problems in the home country (ibid.). In short, peacekeeping deployments and harsh working conditions could exacerbate dissatisfaction between military operatives and political elites (ibid.). Although the notion of unintended consequences is not the main feature of this article, it serves as the basis to embed Ghanaian soldiers' perceptions, views, and experiences, but also as the background against which some of my interlocutors engage in retrospective introspection or judge events.

The literature on the unintended consequences of peacekeeping missions exposes a tendency to highlight the dire consequences of these operations. In line with Aning, who argues that peacekeeping empowers Ghanaian soldiers by outlining the material benefits of peacekeeping deployments (Aning, 2007: 138), I add that peacekeeping could also be beneficial in other ways. For instance, peacekeeping offers African militaries, such as the Ghana Armed Forces, "free training" (Interview with Gr. Capt. D., Air Force Base, Burma Camp, Accra, Ghana [24 July 2014]) through internationalised advanced pre-deployment training and modern military equipment (Wilén, 2012). The pre-deployment training is provided by the international community, that is, the UN, European Union, but also the United States African Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA) programme, which has already provided millions of dollars' worth of training equipment (Aning, 2007).[3] Moreover, peacekeeping exposes Ghanaian peacekeepers not only to new ideas about soldiering, such as fighting counter-insurgents (Interview with Lt. A., Accra, Ghana [4 April 2014]), but also to international norms of human rights (Interview with Lt. Col. Y-M., Accra, Ghana [8 September 2014]) and civilian control over the armed forces (Interview with Lt. Col. D., Accra, Ghana [11 September 2014]; see also Finer, 1962; Huntington, 1957; Janowitz, 1960; Abrahamsson, 1971). Peacekeeping, hence, is a forum where ideas are generated and transferred to peacekeepers (Cunliffe, 2013; Paris, 2010). Adding to Ruffa, who notes how perceptions of missions are informed by existing military cultures, soldiers' experiences in the peacekeeping arena in turn contribute to informing their perceptions of peace and stability at home (Ruffa, 2017).

Adding to this, the article departs from a fundamentally interpretative vantage point. Although there are qualitative contributions to the peacekeeping literature (see for example Aning, 2007; Dwyer, 2015), very few studies feature the soldiers' perceptive, while none examine soldiers' thought processes, their introspective processes, or narratives. Only by engaging with soldiers' introspection in the post-deployment context is it possible to understand how peacekeeping veterans interpret their complex peacekeeping experience and make sense of it in light of their home society.

The article's scope is necessarily limited as interviews could only be conducted after the peacekeepers' deployment. In addition, the interviews were conducted outside the peacekeeping arena at various locations in the home country of the soldiers. Focusing on returning peacekeepers nonetheless reveals how they deal with their experiences in-between deployments and incorporate their experiences in sensemaking processes upon returning to their home society. The article examines how peacekeeping impacts Ghanaian soldiers' ideas through exposure to the horrors of war. It does so through an exploration of the processes of retrospective introspection and interactive reflection, but also the socio-political conditions for the elaboration of these ideas in the soldiers' collective consciousness. It will be argued that these processes eventually allow translating negative peacekeeping experiences into soldiers' positive aspirations for their home society.

Firstly, the concept of introspection, an approach common to psychological studies, will be deployed to illustrate how Ghanaian peacekeeping veterans reflect upon their peacekeeping experiences in the post-deployment phase. Introspection is "an exercise of

perceptual memory or imagination which takes the form of edited, interpreted or imaginatively reconstructed 'replays' of one's experience" (Rankin, 1991: 568). Rankin notes that it is through the re-runs or replays of events that humans deepen their understanding of what really happened, what they believe, intend, and feel (ibid.).

Ghanaian soldiers in the post-peacekeeping phase replay their experiences from the peacekeeping arena to themselves, but also share and exchange their ideas, beliefs, and intentions that result from their retrospective introspection with their environment, that is, friends, family members, colleagues, subordinates, and peers. Through this simultaneously introspective, but also interactive engagement, ideas transferred in the peacekeeping environment are interrogated in their new context, that is, the Ghanaian barracks. Particularly in the process of sharing ideas, the latter gain currency in the Ghanaian barracks when they emerge from the realm of personal experience and enter the collective consciousness.

Secondly, it is argued that retrospective introspection of Ghanaian peacekeepers informs their narratives of peacekeeping experiences. Narratives, here, entail "a *mode of communication* in which people tell stories to entertain, to teach and to learn, but also to interpret events and give meaning to experiences" (Czarniawska, 2004: 10). Baker considers narratives as stories people tell each other about themselves and others about the world in which we live (Baker, 2010: 350). Narratives further constitute a fundamental form of "sense-making" (Barthes, 1977; Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1987). Sense-making, entails here not only the processes of constructing and reconstructing meaning, but also efforts geared towards making sense of actions, events, and objects (Søderberg, 2003). Experience is constituted through narratives which enable people to make sense of what happened and is happening to them by attempting to assemble or integrate these events into one or more narratives (Riedke and Rottenburg, 2016: 7). In other words, Ghanaian soldiers make observations and gather experiences in the peacekeeping arena which they try to make sense of in the post-deployment phase through extensive retrospective deliberations. After processing these observations and experiences, the ideational and thought processes are transformed into narratives that are broadcasted into the barracks and the outside world.

To present Ghanaian peacekeepers' narratives, which are informed by the retrospective introspection of their experiences in war theatres across the globe, my approach is ethnographic and based on empirical data gained through in-depth individual interviews and participant observation in the Ghanaian military barracks. The ethnographic approach enables not only detailed descriptions of Ghanaian soldiers' experiences and observations, but also offers insights into their thought processes and their circulation through narratives in the Ghanaian military barracks. The empirical data for this study was obtained through long-term field investigation of the Ghana Armed Forces between December 2013 and January 2015.

Concretely, I interacted with serving and retired officers and soldiers of all ranks, ranging from privates to generals. Women make up about 9 per cent of the personnel and to ensure gender balance, I proactively included female personnel in my sample. During the fieldwork, I interacted with over a hundred informants (of which about a fifth were

women) in countless informal conversations, and recruited forty interview partners for in-depth engagement. The structured and semi-structured interviews, lasting between thirty minutes to an hour and half, were conducted with soldiers on duty in the barracks in their offices, under trees and sheds or in their living quarters. The retired officers and ex non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were interviewed in their homes or at their new work places outside the barracks. The age of the respondents ranged from twenty-three to over seventy years (for the ex-service men and women). All respondents gave their consent orally, and were selected through theoretically guided snowball-sampling (Atkinson and Flint, 2001), which allowed me to establish trusted relationships with my informants in the "closed world" (Wulff, 2000) of the Ghana Armed Forces and observe that the process of introspection does not happen in isolation, but rather through interpersonal exchanges and interactions, such as meetings, lunches, and coffee breaks, where soldiers gather.

During the fourteen month field study, most of the soldiers I met had toured at least one peacekeeping mission, with the exception of military operatives who had just graduated from the Recruit Training Centre or the Ghana Military Academy (where soldiers and officers are trained, respectively) thus were considered too inexperienced to be deployed (Interview with Lt. Col. A., Accra, Ghana [7 July 2014]). On the other end, I encountered military personnel of the Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment who had been on as many as twelve missions, as their services are in high demand due to their specialised task (Interview with Lt. Col. M-Y; Accra, Ghana [11 September 2014]).

The article proceeds in three parts. I start by embedding the data in the discussion surrounding peacekeeping's "unintended consequences" (Aoi et al., 2007: 7) and the Ghana Armed Forces' institutional transformation. In line with scholars like Dwyer, I propose that peacekeeping should not be studied as a phenomenon that impacts only the peacekeeping arena, but also as an endeavour with implications for the peace and stability of the troop-contributing nation (see also Dwyer, 2015). In addition, I show how the institutional transformation of the Ghana Armed Forces has enabled peacekeeping to become a constructive main body of the argument and inform Ghanaian soldiers' narratives resulting from an assessment of their exposure to the peacekeeping arena; experiences and observations which trigger processes of hindsight introspection on their societal role as soldiers, mainly in relation to ideas of (dis)respect for human life, de-masculinisation and de-feminisation, and the value of stability and continuity. The contribution rounds up with an analysis of how these narratives inform Ghanaian soldiers' self-perceptions and their role as soldiers in their home society.

Consequences of Peacekeeping Deployments in the Ghana Armed Forces

The history of peacekeeping deployments of Ghanaian troops illustrates both negative and positive unintended consequences. While during the period of authoritarian rule, the use of the peacekeeping deployment represented a time to plot coups, the defence reform process initiated by ft. lt. Jerry Rawlings, enabled the military to rebrand itself as a

"civilian-friendly peacekeeping army" (Agyekum, 2019: 162). It has changed the peace-keeping context for Ghanaian deployments resulting in positive unintended consequences.

The Ghana Armed Forces are a military with a tainted past (Aboagye, 1999). Like many militaries in post-independence Africa (First, 1970: 18; Nugent, 2004; Williams, 2009), such as the Nigeria Armed Forces,[4] the Ghanaian military forged its complicated relationship with the Ghanaian state through staging multiple coups. The military's deep involvements in politics in the years 1966, 1972, 1978, 1979, and 1981, and the Ghana Armed Forces' backing of the military regimes that emerged thereafter is well-documented (Hutchful, 1997; Oquaye, 2004; Welch, 1967).

Less attention has been paid to the unintended consequence of peacekeeping deployments in the plotting and execution of mutinies in Ghana, particularly the 1966 and 1981 coups (Interviews with ex-W.O. I K., ex-Cpl. A and Sgt. Y, Accra Ghana [11 December 2014]). Ghanaian soldiers were first deployed to Congo in 1960 (Nwaubani, 2001). In 1961, Ghanaian soldiers mutinied while participating in the ONUC mission (Dwyer, 2015: 208) following an attack on a large number of Ghanaian soldiers. During this mission, the idea for Ghana's first coup in 1966 was "brewed" (Interview with a Peacekeeping veteran and coup maker, Accra, Ghana [May 2014]) "not only because of the pan-Africanism agenda and the anti-Western utterances of the [Dr Kwame] Nkrumah government, which we opposed, but also because of the loss of men we suffered" (ibid.).

The last successful coup in Ghana of 31 December 1981, according to a leading figure of that revolt, was planned during the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon. "We planned that coup during a UNIFIL mission in 1980 because we were dissatisfied with the developments in the country since the 1979 coup. We executed the coup a year later when we returned" (Interview with ex-W. O. Class I K., Accra, Ghana [15 December 2014]). My interlocutors note that deployments provide the best conditions for plotting putsches, as coup makers are camped at the same site and live together. This offers coup plotters the possibility of holding secret meetings in their leisure hours without arousing the suspicion of their commanders, military hierarchy, or military intelligence operatives (Interview with ex-W. O. Class I K., Accra, Ghana [15 December 2014]). Again, the peacekeeping deployment provided the perfect conditions for hatching a coup, a negative unintended consequence.

Since the beginning of 1982, through to the establishment of Ghana's fourth republic in 1992, the Ghana Armed Forces have undergone a major transformation, restoring hierarchy and discipline, banning soldiers from operating outside the barracks, withdrawing soldiers from public administration (Ansah-Koi, 2007: 195), professionalising the rank and file (Agyekum, 2019: 7), and bringing the institution under civilian control (Hutchful, 1997; Oquaye, 2004). These measures have deeply shaped the Ghanaian military's self-image and the public's perception of the armed forces, and with it created the grounds for positive domestic effects of peacekeeping (Agyekum, 2019).

Peacekeeping operations on the African continent have since the 1990s increased in number (Cleaver and May, 1995). Parallel to this development, Ghanaian peacekeeping deployments have multiplied, making peacekeeping an identity marker for Ghanaian

military operatives who consider themselves "soldiers for peace" [Interview with W.O. Class I P., Tamale, Ghana (4 August 2014)]). The central importance of peacekeeping for the Ghana Armed Forces (the Ghanaian military expects its soldiers to be deployed at least once in their careers) has produced careful institutional orchestration of the deployments. As a matter of policy, a rotational system has been established in which the regiments and battalions take turns in forming the nucleus unit of the Ghanaian deployment.

At the institutional level, the Ghanaian military is convinced that deployments contribute to cohesion within its ranks. My respondents narrate that in mission areas, the military has the possibility to organise events and activities that foster closeness among its operatives. Similarly, soldiers who, due to the geographical location of their barracks, normally will not be able to work together, get to collaborate with and know each other (Interview with W.O. Class I P., Tamale, Ghana [4 August 2014]). My interlocutors stress that the Ghanaian military's deployment policy is aimed at diffusing possible tensions and combat discontent that could arise within the barracks due to jealousy when some soldiers are sent on a mission, while others are never deployed.

Furthermore, peacekeeping missions provide valuable training (Aning, 2007: 138; Wilén, 2016) from international partners, which the Ghanaian military would not have had otherwise due to resource constraints. The peacekeeping arena is thus considered a forum for gaining vital military insights and experience. My interlocutors note that Ghanaian soldiers collaborate intensively with military operatives from other countries, thus exposing them to new weapon systems, but also to new methods of fighting, tactics, and to how other militaries run their operations (Interview with Lt. A., Accra, Ghana [7 April 2014]).

Finally, peacekeeping deployments have concrete material benefits for the Ghanaian military operative. The soldiers' income is supplemented with UN daily allowances (Hutchful, 1997). Post peacekeeping earnings are used by military personnel to "purchase plots of land, household appliances, build houses, send their children to better educational institutions, and improve their general living standard" (Aning, 2007).

Peacekeeping deployment of the Ghanaian military has also over the years been instrumentalised for the benefit of various national political agendas. Olonisakin notes that Rawlings purposefully deployed Ghanaian soldiers on peacekeeping missions in the 1980s and 1990s to divert their focus from domestic politics (Olonisakin, 1997). Despite the dangers involved in instrumentalising peacekeeping, my interlocutors argue that peacekeeping is still a useful tool for distracting the military from political engagement (Interview with Lt. Col. D., Accra, Ghana [8 September 2014]). Moreover, peacekeeping provides the political leadership with arguments to counter questions concerning why Ghana needs a military apparatus in the absence of outspoken enemies. Additionally, the government can replenish military stocks without stirring up too much controversy, as these can be legitimised as expenditure for peacekeeping operations (Aning, 2007), while the financial compensation received for deploying its soldiers is used by the government to supplement military spending in times of budget constraints (ibid: 137). In short, "Ghana has made peacekeeping into a veritable resource generating phenomenon"

(ibid: 135). Peacekeeping is also deployed as a diplomacy tool for "the promotion of international peace and security" (Ghana National Defence Policy, 2009: 10). Ghana also uses the peacekeeping deployment of her soldiers to leverage on the international stage, as this allows the country to project its soft power (Personal communication with Dr Aning, November 2017). Framing peacekeeping operations in this manner generates political currency for the Ghanaian state, both nationally and internationally, but crucially also affects the self-perception of the Ghana Armed Forces in a positive way.

In sum, the Ghanaian military's institutional transformation from a source of societal unrest to an organisation under civilian control has gone hand in hand with the transformation of the peacekeeping deployment from an environment where coups could be plotted to one contributing to and shaping soldiers' views and perceptions and the professionalisation of Ghanaian soldiers. In "Experiences in the Peacekeeping Arena as Triggers of Retrospective Introspection" section, I will show that Ghanaian soldiers' exposure to the negative effects of war trigger their processes of introspection in the post-deployment phase adding further to the potential of peacekeeping to positively impact the home society.

Experiences in the Peacekeeping Arena as Triggers of Retrospective Introspection

In this section, I present empirical accounts of events, observations, and experiences that my informants report to have triggered their introspection in the post-peacekeeping phase and form the basis of their narratives.

Ghanaian peacekeepers have been deployed to warzones across the globe. However, the empirical accounts presented here entail events, experiences, and observations from the African conflict zones of Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire. My interlocutors reiterate that events, observations, and experiences in these specific countries have had the most profound and transformative impact on their views as soldiers and as people and serve as the foundation of their narratives.

In my interactions with Ghanaian soldiers, three themes emerged as issues my interlocutors ponder over for long periods in the post-deployment phase: (dis)respect for human life, de-masculinisation and de-feminisation, and the value of stability and continuity. The regular recurrence of these issues in my informants' statements, among many more individual narratives about the peacekeeping arena, point to the value-laden nature of these observations, and the stark contradiction with social and cultural codes shared by my informants across rank and personal background.

The "(Dis)respect for Human Life" section features the narratives of Ghanaian soldiers who have undergone an intensive process of introspection upon return in the barracks after deployment.

(Dis)respect for Human Life

"Peacekeeping spaces" (Henry, 2015) are carefully planned and vigorously monitored by the UN (ibid), but my interlocutors report that war and conflict are among the most agile and unpredictable of events. Even though academics such as Richards have contested the characterisation of African war theatres as chaotic and the actors as barbaric (Richards, 1996), my interlocutors maintain that what they term the erratic behaviour of warring factions generally results in chaos and the movement of large numbers of people, including refugees, development workers, and peacekeepers, and the use of extreme violence against the civilian population. There are also countless accounts of abuses against locals by peacekeepers, for example sexual exploitation of women and children, and looting (see also Higate and Henry, 2010).

Professional soldiers are assumed to be hardened and immune to acts of violence (Ellis, 1995). However, the violence witnessed by Ghanaian peacekeepers in the well-documented Rwandan genocide (Mamdani, 2001; Uvin, 1997) shocked even the most battle-hardened Ghanaian military operatives dispatched on peacekeeping and UN observer missions. An officer deployed in the immediate aftermath of the genocide, narrates:

When you are in the field and see the piles of countless corpses in churches, under sheds and along the roadside; that is when you really see and feel the unimaginable, intense hate. This experience really affected me psychologically and changed me for good (Interview with Gr. Capt. A-D., Accra, Ghana [7 July 2014]).

The Rwandan genocide, according to my interlocutors, is the worst witnessed by Ghanaian peacekeepers so far. The unprecedented level of violence and hatred in this war, my interlocutors narrate, not only destroys people's lives and demonstrates a complete lack of value for human life, but also cuts deep into the social fibre of society, turning "former neighbours into enemies" (ibid.). The Rwanda experiences still haunt many of my interlocutors.

Similarly, although not on the same scale as the Rwandan genocide, the atrocities witnessed in the Liberian civil war stunned the most experienced professional Ghanaian soldier (ibid.). A Ghanaian peacekeeping veteran, deployed as part of the first ECOMOG (see also Adibe, 1997; Huchtful, 1999) mission narrates his experience: "I remember the smell of death that met us upon arrival in Monrovia. There were a lot of dead bodies of civilians, as far as the eyes could see; lying on the streets rotting in the hot sun with vultures flying above in the sky" (Informal conversation with W.O. Class I V., Tema, Ghana [6 May 2014]). From my interlocutor's point of view, this upon arrival scene depicts a "complete disrespect for human life" (Interview with W.O. Class I A., Tema, Ghana [9 May 2014]). Although the peacekeepers are aware of the circumstances, namely, the families of the deceased had fled to escape the violence, and thus were unavailable to collect the dead for burial (Informal conversation with W.O. Class I V., Tema, Ghana [6 May 2014]), witnessing the decomposing bodies was still an alienating experience for my respondents as Ghanaian cultural codes dictate respectful treatment of the dead and an honourable, befitting burial (Nukunya, 2003: 73). Hence, the idea that vultures have the possibility to feast on the dead is an unbearable thought from the Ghanaian peacekeepers' cultural perspective, and directly expresses grave disrespect for the deceased.

In accordance with Ellis, who notes that the Liberian war was characterised by "a high level of savagery with violence and torture commonplace" (Ellis, 1995), my interlocutors observe that war inspires lawlessness. Conflict invokes a devaluation of human life, a point clearly narrated by a Ghanaian peacekeeper in Liberia:

> We were on duty on the main bridge [Gabriel Tucker Bridge] in Monrovia. A car full of rebels was approaching at top speed. I could also see scuffles in the vehicle. As it approached, a lady, a rebel from the opposing side, who had been captured, got out of the car through the window. The car stopped, the guys run after her and caught her. They tied her feet and elbows tightly behind her back together, then made an insertion in her chest with, I guess, a razorblade. She tore open and bled to death; they call it *tabé*. This behaviour is senseless (Interview with W.O. Class I A., Tamale, Ghana [6 August 2014]).

The description in the vignette is not an isolated incident. There are far more harrowing accounts of violence witnessed by my interlocutors in the Liberian and other peacekeeping arenas that they could interpret as a devaluation of human life. For instance, my respondents who served in the early ECOMOG missions narrate removing corpses of pregnant women, children, and elderly from the streets of Liberia, but also witnessed dead bodies deployed as obstacles and checkpoints by rebels. This objectification of human bodies even beyond death, my informants point out, clashes with Ghanaian peacekeepers' beliefs in the respect for the dead.

Another incident that according to my interlocutors illustrates disrespect for human life, is narrated by a veteran, deployed to Liberia as a young private soldier:

> A beautiful girl just stepped out of her house. Unfortunately for her, a convoy of rebels was driving by. One of the men saw her, got out of a car and put his arms around her. The rebel told his commander that he was staying behind, because he had found his wife. The commander got out of the leading vehicle, took out his pistol and shot her there and then in the head, then the convoy drove off with the rebel (Interview with W.O. Class I A., Tamale, Ghana [6 August 2014]).

The point of the graphic testimonies of my interlocutors is not only to illustrate the horrors of war, but also to illustrate the devaluation of human life, and the senselessness violent conflict inspires. These experiences are brought back to the Ghanaian barracks and in the post-deployment phase replayed and re-digested, that is, introspection. Additionally, Ghanaian peacekeepers' observations and experiences in the African war theatres have brought the effects of violence closer because they are Africans who have seen and interacted with other Africans in distress. These narratives help them not only make sense of these experiences, but also make the consequences of war visible and tangible to them.

De-Masculinisation and De-Feminisation

Masculinity in the African, and certainly in the Ghanaian context, is closely related to a man's ability to generate financial resources that enable him to fulfil his breadwinner's

role in the household (Adjei, 2016). Viewed in this light, the archetypical Ghanaian family is a patriarchal institution (Adinkrah, 2014), adhering to Ghanaian social constructions of masculinity, which generally translates into a married man's ability to cater for his wife and offspring (Adjei, 2016). A man who is unable to provide both economically and materially for his wife and children is considered useless (Adinkrah, 2012). At the same time, the predominantly male perception of Ghanaian peacekeepers, expects women to maintain respect through their role as committed wives and caretakers. Where women take on the role of main breadwinner, they are perceived as de-feminised. In this section, I present empirical narratives of my interlocutors about loss of masculinity and femininity witnessed in warzones, but also the introspection de-masculisation and de-feminisation triggered for Ghanaian peacekeepers resulting in the narratives presented here.

Based on observations in the African peacekeeping arena and encounters with Africans affected by war, my interlocutors conclude that war de-masculinises men. Prior to the Liberian civil war, this country was highly esteemed by Ghanaians, as it is the oldest West African state (Ellis, 1995). Certainly, in the 1980s Liberia was prosperous by African standards due to American protection and the dollar as currency (ibid.). An informant recalls how Liberia attracted Ghanaians seeking greener pastures away from home: "When I was a small boy, my uncles went to hustle there" (Interview with Staff Sgt. A., Accra, Ghana [9 April 2014]). My respondents, however, note that during the war in Liberia, and similarly in Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire, economic activities stalled with most men in these war affected countries losing their sources of income and livelihoods. Abandoned businesses and lost harvests left local men with no possibilities of generating income to provide for their families (Interview with Staff Sgt. S., Accra, Ghana [16 April 2014]).

Ghanaian soldiers embark on peacekeeping missions with their culturally infused notions of masculinity. In this arena, the peacekeepers witness how war affects men in a specific manner: de-masculinisation. An interlocutor narrates interactions with men in Cote d'Ivoire: "Men came to our camp in search of food because they were hungry. Out of desperation, they offered their wives, daughters and other women to other men in exchange for food" (Interview with W. O. Class II A., Tema, Ghana [6 May 2014]). From the Ghanaian peacekeeper's cultural perspective, these men lost their manhood when they ceased to provide for those under their custody and care, especially women and children, while their inability to fulfil the breadwinner's role rendered them useless.

My informants narrate how witnessing the powerlessness of other men in warzones triggered a process of introspection, thus reflecting upon what being in a helpless situation would mean for their masculinity. In the words of an interlocutor: "I'd rather be shot in the face than have to go through what these men had to do to get a bit of food" (Interview with Lt. A., Accra, Ghana [4 April 2014]). Post-peacekeeping introspection reveals to my interlocutors that war in their country could result in the loss of masculinity/manhood. A situation my interlocutors consider absolutely undesirable, a source of disgrace and humiliation.

Similar to men, my respondents narrate that war also de-feminises women, forcing them into undesirable practices. Traditionally, the position of the Ghanaian woman is under the guardianship of a man, thus contributing to his masculinity/manhood (Adjei, 2016). My interlocutors observe that women who lost their husbands and partners during the war were often left with no primary breadwinner (Malton, 2016). The war basically pushed them into the breadwinner's role making them providers for their family members. These women are considered less feminine by my Ghanaian interlocutors.

Ghanaian male peacekeepers link the loss of the breadwinner to the women's precarious position, and argue that the harsh economic circumstances of war force some into prostitution or into offering sexual favours in exchange for food and money. "People lose their self-confidence in war. You see respectable middle-aged women and mothers hanging around with young boys and men. It is war so she has to find a way to get by and others take advantage of her situation" (Interview with Sgt A., Accra, Ghana [14 April 2014]). From the Ghanaian peacekeepers' cultural perspective, a middle-aged woman is expected to respect herself, thus should not be seen engaging with a young man or men who could be considered beneath her stature. "She is no longer a respectable woman. In our culture, a middle-aged woman or a mother has a standing, she is not supposed to be with someone under her status." In other words, the woman is de-feminised when she indulges with someone considered beneath her level or her societal status.

Moreover, from my interlocutors' viewpoint, an African woman who exhibits culturally accepted behaviour, such as respect for and obedience to her husband, is considered feminine (Adjei, 2016). Promiscuous women, on the contrary, are considered to be less feminine, because they act "masculine" (Ratele et al., 2010). Although my interlocutors appreciate and are sympathetic to the fact that war circumstances drove these women into what they consider promiscuous behaviour and prostitution,[5] my interlocutors still judge them to be "less women" (ibid: 565). In other words, although what is considered culturally appropriate behaviour for women becomes blurred in war, women are still judged by the soldiers for indulging with men other than their custodians for money and food. The women's actions, to my respondents, outweigh the circumstances that have driven them into such activities, but also factors that have driven her into taking on the breadwinner's role. To ensure that their women never undergo such tribulation, Ghanaian soldiers argue that they will do whatever it takes to avoid war in their country.

Although Ghanaian peacekeepers frown upon women for their promiscuity and perceive men affected by war as less masculine, and by extension humiliated, my interlocutors assess their home society through the misfortune of others who are labelled as suffering "de-masculinisation" and "de-feminisation" as a result of war. The circumstances of the victims of conflict serve as a strong warning to my interlocutors who note that they do not wish for themselves or the women under their guardianship to ever have to make such choices due to war.

Narratives of Continuity: Appreciation for Peace and the Value of Stability

In this section, I discuss how peacekeeping has contributed to Ghanaian soldiers' appreciation of peace, and the value of stability and continuity in their country. Since the establishment of Ghana's Fourth Republic in 1992, the country has repeatedly been applauded for holding free and fair elections and peaceful transitions of power (Agyeman-Duah, 2008; Gyimah-Boadi, 2001). Since the departure from the coup era, Ghana entered a period marked by peace and stability (ibid.), with the country gaining an international reputation as the "beacon of democracy in West Africa."[6] Due to its status, Ghana can afford to deploy soldiers to peacekeeping missions. An unintended but effective consequence of peacekeeping deployments is the undiluted message these deployments broadcast to Ghanaian soldiers: "When you see the misery elsewhere, you are reminded of the importance of peace. You are glad that you have peace in your country" (Interview with Gr. Capt. A-D., Accra, Ghana [7 July 2014]). In other words, the value of a peaceful environment becomes more apparent to Ghanaian peacekeepers in the peacekeeping arena.

My informants narrate that a peaceful environment results in continuity and predictability, which have specific advantages. These conditions, my respondents contend, guarantee continuity which allow them to make long-term plans and investments. "We are planning good futures for our children and don't want the plans to be disturbed by a coup or war" (Interview with Air Force W.O. Class I O., Accra, Ghana [20 July 2014]). In war situations, my interlocutors have observed during deployments that investments in future generations are almost impossible, because children drop out of school. Similarly, in warzones, Ghanaian soldiers note that it is impossible for them to educate themselves to further their professionalisation and ultimately their careers.

Ghanaian soldiers generally invest – often making use of incomes generated through peacekeeping – in long-term income generating ventures such as "building houses, setting up farms and businesses, to supplement their income upon retirement." These future-oriented endeavours need time to mature, and engaging in war would disrupt the execution of my informants' future planning (ibid.). Through the process of introspection, Ghanaian soldiers assess their personal long-term future planning, aspirations, and investments against the backdrop of volatility and unpredictability witnessed in most African war theatres. Through introspection in the post-peacekeeping phase, but also during the deployment, my interlocutors appreciate the importance of peace, stability, and predictability in their country.

The Effect of Peacekeeping Experiences on Ghanaian Soldiers' Self-Perceptions and Their Societal Role

This section of the article analyses how peacekeeping experiences influence the Ghanaian soldiers' thinking and self-perception in the post-deployment phase through processes of individual as well as collective introspection and narratives of (dis)respect for human

life, de-masculinisation and de-feminisation, and appreciation for peace and the value of stability.

Introspection involves Ghanaian soldiers replaying and re-digesting (Rankin, 1991: 568) their peacekeeping experiences in the post-peacekeeping phase. Experiences, observations, ideas, and knowledge Ghanaian peacekeepers are exposed to during their missions are re-examined in the quiet of the barracks, both individually and collectively. During formal military gatherings, such as durbars, but also informally during breaks soldier discuss with colleagues, peers, friends, and family members, who stayed behind. The conversations I observed centred on a range of peacekeeping experiences, views, and perspectives. In one such incidence, at Kamina Barracks, home of the sixth Infantry Battalion of the Ghanaian military, in Tamale, Northern Ghana, soldiers are slowly gathering for a durbar with their commanding officer (CO) under the shed next to the regimental square. While waiting for the arrival of the CO, a group of six senior non-commissioned officers engage each other about their upcoming deployments and their expectations, but at the same time, reflect on past experiences elsewhere. These exchanges usually begin with "Do you remember when we were on patrol to…. on the way we saw …. do you remember?"; "Do you remember when were on guard duties at… that was tough?"; "Do you remember when the women and children came to the camp in … it was heart-breaking?"; Or "Do you remember when the men came to us for water and food in … unbelievable?" In the incidence quoted above soldiers revisited events from their past deployments, meandered through their memories, jostled back and forth, while assessing and shaping their deployment experiences with each other; deeply personal views, perceptions, and experiences were shared and individual experiences were catapulted into a collective process of retrospective introspection in the Ghanaian barracks.

Concretely, in such formal and informal gatherings that Ghanaian peacekeepers' stories about piles of countless bodies in churches, under sheds, and along the roadside come to the fore. It is in these types of settings that Ghanaian soldiers exchange and recall with each other seeing decomposing bodies and about the smell of death meeting them upon arrival in Monrovia or witnessing the senseless killing of a young woman by rebels for being at the wrong place at the wrong time. In this environment, soldiers exchange stories of seeing men and women in war-torn countries suffering de-masculinisation and de-feminisation as a result of the conflict in their nation. Stories of men who were unable to fulfil their socially and culturally expected role of the breadwinner and as a result of hunger offered their female family members to other men in exchange for food. Or stories of women taking up the breadwinner's role or war forcing women into promiscuous behaviour. It is in such interactions that Ghanaian peacekeepers exchange and reflect upon the value of peace, stability and continuity in their home society.

Put differently, in these types of interactions soldiers openly discuss with each other about their experiences, views, and perceptions from the peacekeeping arena, and these form the bases for their narratives. It is through this collective retrospective assessments that the Ghanaian peacekeepers' experiences gain meaning in the post-peacekeeping

phase and become attached to specific narratives which carry collectively agreed upon truths; these then result in shared narratives of (dis)respect for human life, de-masculinisation and de-feminisation, appreciation for peace, and the value of stability.

The peacekeeping arena serves as a forum where Ghanaian soldiers are exposed to experiences which in turn are used to interpret domestic politics. Despite Ghana's international reputation as a peaceful and stable country, the harsh tone of public political debates in the various national media outlets indicates fierce competition in the political arena. Occasionally, Ghanaian politicians seem to insinuate a willingness to use violence to gain or retain power (Justice Ghana, 2017). These insinuations are much to the chagrin of Ghanaian peacekeeping veterans leading to the common response: "They [politicians] don't know what they are talking about. War is very hard and ugly!" (Interview with W. O. Class I TN., Accra, Ghana [9 April 2014]).

Peacekeeping has exposed Ghanaian soldiers to the effects of war and conflict first-hand. Ghanaian soldiers assess the insinuations of using violence by the political class and their possible repercussions on society based on their peacekeeping experiences and their introspection. These dictate to my interlocutors that war should not be taken lightly, as its outcome would most likely be to rebuild even the most basic infrastructure, while its traumatised citizens would have to be nursed to overcome their experiences of violence. The general consensus under my interlocutors is that war is undesirable in their country. This unanimous conclusion, my interlocutors narrate, shapes their views of the importance of preserving peace and stability in their home society, but also their resentment towards politicians who insinuate violence.

Peacekeeping makes Ghanaian soldiers reflect on their sense of duty and service. "We have taken an oath to defend our nation, by land, air, and sea. That is our task; after what we have seen elsewhere, we take this very seriously" (Interview with Maj. Gen. A., Accra, Ghana (1 May 2014); see Constitution of Ghana, 1992). My interlocutors reiterate the view that a military's purpose is to serve and defend its host society from external enemies of that state, but also to provide security to state institutions and preserve peace. However, my informants narrate witnessing in various African war theatres, for instance in Liberia, that the military was not used for state protection, but rather for the defence of a regime (Interview with W.O. Class II H., Accra, Ghana [9 April 2014]). My respondents narrate that when regime survival is the military's goal when other actors challenge the government's legitimacy, these armed forces tend to crumble under duress, leading to (civil) war. According to my respondents, this painful realisation has strengthened their sense of duty to serve and defend their country, rather than serve the narrow interests of politicians. Peacekeeping in this manner amplifies Ghanaian soldiers' sense of duty and service to their nation. Through intensive personal and collective processes of reflection, peacekeeping shapes them as soldiers, and informs their reflections about their role in society.

Conclusion

This article set out to examine how Ghanaian soldiers make sense of their peacekeeping experiences; the thought processes peacekeeping veterans undergo in the post-peacekeeping deployment phase and how they arrive at the narratives they form based on their experiences.

As argued throughout this piece, most studies on peacekeeping omit the voice of the soldier. However, the deployment of qualitative methods makes it possible not only to prominently feature Ghanaian peacekeepers' voices, but also through personal interactions and interviews we gain insights into their thought processes, while digging deeper into their construction and re-construction of their various narratives. Additionally, qualitative methods make it possible for us to understand how Ghanaian peacekeeping veterans, in the post-deployment phase bring their experiences, observations, and views together. Qualitative methods also allow us a preview into how Ghanaian soldiers in the post-deployment phase connect their experiences from the conflict zones to developments in their home society.

Further, recent literature on "unintended consequences" of peacekeeping operations focus mostly on their negative implications, on both the deployed military and the troop-contributing nation. Considering the Ghanaian military's tainted past, and the fact that Ghanaian soldiers have used their peacekeeping deployments as an opportunity to either mutiny or plot coups, it is tempting to follow this line of reasoning. However, my study has shown that unintended consequences are more ambiguous and complex. Although in some cases, the unintended consequences have been negative, at the institutional level, the military has benefitted from international knowledge transfer, while at the person level, soldiers have been able to improve their living standard as a result of peacekeeping deployments. In short, unintended consequences are not only negative or positive, but could also be used as the background against which Ghanaian soldiers assess their peacekeeping experiences or the trigger of their retrospective introspection.

Retrospective introspection is another avenue through which Ghanaian soldiers make sense of their peacekeeping experiences. Through replaying and a reassessment of experiences, Ghanaian soldiers introspect and interpret their complex peacekeeping experiences and make sense of them in light of their environment. This deep process of assessment ultimately informs Ghanaian peacekeepers' narratives about war and its devastating effects on society, while co-constructing in the end the way they perceive (political) order in their home society. In other words, Ghanaian soldiers' process of introspection in the post-deployment phase results in sense making of their experiences through the construction and reconstruction of narratives about (dis)respect for human life, de-masculinisation and de-feminisation, and the value of stability and continuity, which are broadcasted to their environment, thus not only bringing the peacekeeping experience home and making it tangible for those who stayed behind, but also giving credence to the soldiers' voice.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Notes

1. Since their first deployment, Ghanaian soldiers have been sent to Lebanon, Cambodia, Liberia, Croatia, Rwanda, Chad, Niger, Sierra Leone, Iraq/Kuwait, Somalia, and Western Sahara. Ghanaians are involved in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), and United Nations operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI). In recent decades, the UN has collaborated with regional bodies, for example in the AU-UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) equally including Ghanaian soldiers (cf. Firsing, 2014; Murithi, 2008; Williams, 2009).
2. Interview with Lt. Col. D., Accra, Ghana (8 September 2014).
3. Check ACOTA website for goals of the programme: http://www.africom.mil/what-we-do/security-cooperation/acota-africa-contingency-operations-training-and-assistance (accessed 29 December 2017).
4. For elaborate reflections on similarities between West African militaries, see Luckham, 1994.
5. Although none of my male informants spoke about engaging the services of prostitutes, it is known in the barracks that Ghanaian soldiers on peacekeeping missions regularly visit prostitutes.
6. British Minister for Africa hails Ghana statement, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-africa-hails-ghana-as-a-beacon-ofdemocracy-following-successful-elections (accessed 2 December 2016).

References

Aboagye FB (1999) *The Ghana army: a concise contemporary guide to its centennial regimental history, 1897-1999*. Accra: Sedco Publishing Limited.

Abrahamsson B (1971) *Military professionalization and political power*. Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications.

Adibe CE (1997) The Liberian conflict and the ECOWAS-UN partnership. *Third World Quarterly* 18(3): 471–488. DOI: 10.1080/01436599714821.

Adinkrah M (2012) Better dead than dishonored: masculinity and male suicidal behavior in contemporary Ghana. *Social Science & Medicine* 74(4): 474–481. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed. 2010.10.011.

Adinkrah M (2014) Intimate partner femicide-suicides in Ghana: victims, offenders, and incident characteristics. *Violence Against Women* 20(9): 1078–1096. DOI: 10.1177/10778012 14549637.

Adjei SB (2016) Masculinity and spousal violence: discursive accounts of husbands who abuse their wives in Ghana. *Journal of Family Violence* 31(4): 411–422. DOI: 10.1007/s10896-015-9781-z.

Agyekum HA (2019) *From Bullies to Officers and Gentlemen: How Notions of Professionalism and Civility Transformed the Ghana Armed Forces*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.

Atkinson R and Flint J (2001) Accessing hidden and hard to reach populations: Snowball research strategies. *Social Research Update* 33: 1–4.

Aning EK (2007) Unintended consequences of peace operations for troop-contributing countries from West Africa: the case of Ghana. In: Aoi C, de Coning C and Thakur R (eds) *Unintended Consequences of Peacekeeping Operations*. Tokyo, New York, Paris: United Nations University Press, 133–155.

Aning EK, Aubyn F and Annan N (2013) *Africa's Resistance to Peacekeeping's Normative Change*. Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

Aning K and Edu-Afful F (2013) Unintended impacts and the gendered consequences of peacekeeping economies in Liberia. *International Peacekeeping* 20(1): 17–32. DOI: 10.1080/13533312.2013.761828.

Ansah-Koi K (2007) The security agencies and national security in a decade of Liberalism. In: Boafo-Arthur K (ed.) *One Decade of the Liberal State*. Dakar: CODESRIA.

Aoi C, de Coning C and Thakur R (2007) *Unintended Consequences of Peacekeeping Operations*. Tokyo, New York, Paris: United Nations University Press.

Agyeman-Duah B (2008) Introduction: fifty years in perspective. In: Agyeman-Duah B (ed.) *Ghana Governance in the Fourth Republic*. Tema: Digibooks Ghana, pp. 1–31.

Baker M (2010) Narratives of terrorism and security: 'accurate' translations, suspicious frames. *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 3(3): 347–364. DOI: 10.1080/17539153.2010.521639.

Barthes R (1977) *Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives: Image-Music-Text*. Glasgow: William Collins.

Bartone PT, Adler AB and Vaitkus MA (1998) Dimensions of psychological stress in peacekeeping operations. *Military Medicine* 163(9): 587–593. DOI: 10.1093/milmed/163.9.587.

Bruner JS (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Minds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cleaver G and May R (1995) Peacekeeping: the African dimension. *Review of African Political Economy* 22(66): 485–497. DOI: 10.1080/03056249508704154.

Constitution of Ghana (1992) Republic of Ghana.

Cunliffe P (2013) *Legions of Peace: UN Peacekeepers From the Global South*. London: C.H. Hurst & Co.

Czarniawska B (2004) *Narratives in Social Science Research: Introducing Qualitative Methods*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Dwyer M (2015) Peacekeeping abroad, trouble making at home: mutinies in West Africa. *African Affairs* 114(455): 206–225. DOI: 10.1093/afraf/adv004.

Ellis S (1995) LIBERIA 1989–1994 a study of ethnic and spiritual violence. *African Affairs* 94(375): 165–197. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordjournals.afraf.a098806.

Finer SE (1962) *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*. London and Dunmow: Pall Mall Press.

Firsing S (2014) Thinking through the role of Africa's militaries in peacekeeping: the cases of Nigeria, Ethiopia and Rwanda. *South African Journal of International Affairs* 21(1): 45–67. DOI: 10.1080/10220461.2014.894685.

First R (1970) *The Barrel of a gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'etat*. London: Penguin Books.

Fortna VP and Howard LM (2008) Pitfalls and prospects in the peacekeeping literature. *Annual Review of Political Science* 11(1): 283–301. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.9.041205.103022.

Ghana National Defence Policy (2009) Unpublished document.

Goulding M (1993) The evolution of United nations peacekeeping. *International Affairs* 69(3): 451–464. DOI: 10.2307/2622309.

Gyimah-Boadi E (2001) A peaceful turnover in Ghana. *Journal of Democracy* 12(2): 103–117. DOI: 10.1353/jod.2001.0026.

Henry M (2015) Parades, parties and pests: contradictions of everyday life in Peacekeeping economies. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9(3): 372–390.

Higate P and Henry M (2010) Space, performance and everyday security in the Peacekeeping context. *International Peacekeeping* 17(1): 32–48. DOI: 10.1080/13533311003589165.

Huchtful E (1999) The ECOMOG experience with peacekeeping in West Africa. In: Malan M (ed) *Whither Peacekeeping in Africa? ISS Monograph Series*, pp. 61–85, pp..

Huntington S (1957) *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Hutchful E (1997) Military policy and reform in Ghana. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 35(2): 251–278. DOI: 10.1017/S0022278X97002450.

Janowitz M (1960) *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*. New York and London: The Free Press.

Jennings KM (2010) Unintended consequences of intimacy: political economies of Peacekeeping and sex tourism. *International Peacekeeping* 17(2): 229–243. DOI: 10.1080/135333110036 25126.

Justice Ghana (2017) Hate speech and Ghana's political future. In: Justice Ghana. Available at: http://justiceghana.com/blog/law-justice/hate-speech-and-ghanas-democratic-future/ (accessed 20 October 2017).

Karlsrud J (2015) The UN at war: examining the consequences of peace-enforcement mandates for the UN peacekeeping operations in the CAR, the DRC and Mali. *Third World Quarterly* 36(1): 40–54. DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2015.976016.

Luckham R (1994) The military, militarization and democratization in Africa: a survey of literature and issues. *African Studies Review* 37(2): 13–75. DOI: 10.2307/524766.

Malan M (1999) Leaner and meaner? The future of peacekeeping in Africa. *African Security Review* 8(4): 45–61. DOI: 10.1080/10246029.1999.9627905.

Malton J (2016) Racial capitalism and the crisis of black masculinity. *American Sociological Review* 81(5): 1013–1038.

Mamdani M (2001) *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Murithi T (2008) The African Union's evolving role in peacekeeping operations: the African Union Mission in Burundi, the African Union Mission in Sudan and the African Union Mission in Somalia. *African Security Review* 17(1): 69–82. DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2008.9627460.

Nugent P (2004) *Africa Since Independence: A Comparative History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nukunya GK (2003) *Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.

Nwaubani E (2001) Eisenhower, Nkrumah and the Congo crisis. *Journal of Contemporary History* 36(4): 599–622. DOI: 10.1177/002200940103600403.

Olonisakin F (1997) African "home-made" peacekeeping Initiatives. *Armed Forces & Society* 23(3): 349–371. DOI: 10.1177/0095327X9702300303.

Oquaye M (2004) *Politics in Ghana 1982-1992: Rawlings, Revolution and Populist Democracy*. Accra, New Delhi: Tornado Publications.

Paris R (2010) Saving liberal peacebuilding. *Review of International Studies* 36(2): 337–365. DOI: 10.1017/S0260210510000057.

Polkinghorne DE (1987) *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany, NY: State of Albany University Press.

Pouligny B (2006) *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People*. London: Hurst.

Providing for Peacekeeping (2018) Peacekeeping contributor profile: Ghana. In: *Providing for Peacekeeping*. Available at: http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-ghana/ (accessed 20 October 2018).

Rankin K (1991) The disappearance of introspection by William E. Lyons. *Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence* 25(4): 567–569.

Ratele K, Shefer T, Strebel A, et al. (2010) 'We Do Not Cook, We Only Assist Them': Constructions of Hegemonic Masculinity Through Gendered Activity. *Journal of Psychology in Africa* 20(4): 557–567.

Richards P (1996) *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone*. London, Oxford: James Currey.

Riedke E and Rottenburg R (2016) Introduction: the ordering power of narratives. *Working Papers of the Priority Programme 1448 of the German Research Foundation*: 5–15.

Roberts A (1994) The crisis of UN peacekeeping. *Survival* 36(3): 93–120. DOI: 10.1080/0039 6339408442752.

Rubinstein RA (1998) Methodological challenges in the ethnographic study of multilateral peacekeeping. *Political and Legal Anthropological Review* 21(1): 138–149. DOI: 10.1525/pol. 1998.21.1.138.

Ruffa C (2017) Military cultures and force employment in peace operations. *Security Studies* 26(3): 391–422. DOI: 10.1080/09636412.2017.1306393.

Shigemura J and Nomura S (2002) Mental health issues of peacekeeping workers. *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 56(5): 483–491. DOI: 10.1046/j.1440-1819.2002.01043.x.

Søderberg AM (2003) Sensegiving and sensemaking in integration processes: a narrative approach to the study of international acquisition. In: Czarniawska B and Gagliardi P (eds) *Narratives We Organize by*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 3–37.

Uvin P (1997) Prejudice, crisis, and genocide in Rwanda. *African Studies Review* 40(2): 91–115. DOI: 10.2307/525158.

Welch CE (1967) Soldier and state in Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 5(3): 305–322. DOI: 10.1017/S0022278X00016098.

Williams PD (2009) Into the Mogadishu maelstrom: the African Union Mission in Somalia. *International Peacekeeping* 16(4): 514–530. DOI: 10.1080/13533310903184713.

Wilén N (2012) *Justifying Intervention in Africa: (De) Stabilizing Sovereignty in Liberia, Burundi and the Congo*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wilén N (2016) From foe to Friend? Army integration after war in Burundi, Rwanda and the Congo. *International Peacekeeping* 23(1): 79–106. DOI: 10.1080/13533312.2015. 1103187.

Williams PD (2013) Protection, resilience and empowerment: United Nations peacekeeping and violence against civilians in contemporary war zones. *Politics* 33(4): 287–298. DOI: 10.1111/ 1467-9256.12014.

Wulff H (2000) Access to a closed world: methods for a multilocale study on ballet as a career. In: Amit V (ed.) *Constructing the Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World.*. London, New York: Routledge, pp. 147–161.

Author Biography

Humphrey Asamoah Agyekum graduated in African Studies at Leiden University in 2011, where he studied political violence and insecurity and their implications on young people's future planning in post-conflict Guinea-Bissau. In 2016, he received his PhD in Anthropology at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Currently, he is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. His research areas of interest are peacekeeping, Ghana Armed Forces, African militaries, and civil–military relations.
E-mail: haa@ifs.ku.dk

Informal Conversation and Interviews

Informal conversation with W.O. Class I V., Tema, Ghana (6 May 2014).
Interview with a Peacekeeping veteran and coup maker, Accra, Ghana (May 2014).
Interview with Air Force W.O. Class I O., Accra, Ghana (20 July 2014).
Interview with ex-W. O. Class I K., Accra, Ghana. (15 December 2014).
Interview with Gr. Capt. A-D., Accra, Ghana (7 July 2014).
Interview with Gr. Capt. D., Air Force Base, Burma Camp, Accra, Ghana (24 July 2014).
Interview with Lt. A., Accra, Ghana (4 April 2014).
Interview with Lt. A., Accra, Ghana (7 April 2014).
Interview with Lt. Col. A., Accra, Ghana (7 July 2014).
Interview with Lt. Col. D., Accra, Ghana (11 September 2014).
Interview with Lt. Col. D., Accra, Ghana (8 September 2014).
Interview with Lt. Col. M-Y; Accra, Ghana (11 September 2014).
Interview with Lt. Col. Y-M., Accra, Ghana (8 September 2014).
Interview with Maj. Gen. A., Accra, Ghana (1 May 2014).
Interview with Sgt A., Accra, Ghana (14 April 2014).
Interview with Staff Sgt. A., Accra, Ghana (9 April 2014).
Interview with Staff Sgt. S., Accra, Ghana (16 April 2014).
Interview with W. O. Class I TN., Accra, Ghana (9 April 2014).
Interview with W. O. Class II A., Tema, Ghana (6 May 2014).
Interview with W. O. Class I A., Tamale, Ghana (6 August 2014).
Interview with W. O. Class I A., Tema, Ghana (9 May 2014).
Interview with W. O. Class I P., Tamale, Ghana (4 August 2014).
Interview with W.O. Class II H., Accra, Ghana (9 April 2014).
Interviews with ex-W. O. I K., ex-Cpl. A and Sgt. Y, Accra Ghana (11 December 2014).
Personal communication with Dr E.K. Aning, Teshie, Ghana (November 2017).

Erfahrungen von Blauhelmsoldaten als Auslöser von Selbstreflektion in Ghanas Militärkasernen

Zusammenfassung

Politische Eliten in Afrika waren bei der militärischen Unterstützung für Friedensmissionen der Vereinten Nationen entgegenkommend und haben einen substanziellen Teil des Personals gestellt. Trotz dieses Beitrags lassen die meisten Studien zu *Peacekeeping* die afrikanischen Soldaten mit ihren Erfahrungen auf den afrikanischen Kriegsschauplätzen nicht zu Wort kommen. Dieser Artikel skizziert Narrative ghanaischer Soldaten über ihre *Peacekeeping*-Einsätze und zeigt, wie ihre Erfahrungen auf ihre Heimatgesellschaft übertragen werden. Ghanaische Soldaten stellen ihre Erfahrungen als abschreckende Beispiele für ihre Heimatgesellschaft dar, was ihre Handlungen und Verhaltensweisen beeinflussen kann. Die Studie stützt sich auf Interviews sowie informelle Gespräche mit Blauhelm-Veteranen und diensthabenden Militärs. Es wird deutlich, dass die Narrative ghanaischer Soldaten über friedenssichernde Erfahrungen und die kollektiven Prozesse, durch die diese Erzählungen in der Kaserne und darüber hinaus an Bedeutung gewinnen, durch Selbstreflektion in der Phase nach dem Einsatz beeinflusst werden.

Schlagwörter

Peacekeeping, Selbstreflektion, Narrative, ghanaisches Militär, ghanische Blauhelmsoldaten