

Introduction: Assembling Peacekeeping and Policing in Ghana

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By exploring the case of Ghana, this special issue provides two perspectives on UN peacekeeping that until now have been underdeveloped in the literature. First, rather than taking a mission and its host country as the analytical point of departure, the contributions in the special issue focus on how peacekeeping has shaped domestic security in Ghana – a consistent contributor of security personnel to peacekeeping since 1960. Second, instead of focusing on the military component, attention is paid to the link between peacekeeping and law enforcement, and thus how policing – as carried out by the state-sanctioned Ghana Police Service, Ghana Armed Forces and a range of non-state actors – intertwines with and is partially shaped by practices, ideas and discourse that can be traced back to mission deployments. Theoretically, the concept of assemblage is used to frame how peacekeeping stretches across state boundaries and intersects with the politics and practices of domestic security provision. Both at a state institutional level, and in day-to-day policing by individual police officers, order-making practices and discourses are constituted by the assembling of a multitude of logics and historicities that integrate and assimilate as well as contradict and oppose one another. It is how the experience of peacekeeping becomes part of and shapes these ever-evolving assemblages that the contributions to this special issue investigate. Changes may be institutional and macro-political but are as often deeply personal and individualised, with implications for how security personnel perceive and practice their roles.

Keywords: UN peacekeeping, security, assemblage theory, policing, Ghana

Résumé

En explorant le cas du Ghana, ce numéro spécial offre deux perspectives sur le maintien de la paix de l'ONU qui, jusqu'à présent, ont été peu développées dans la littérature. Tout d'abord, plutôt que de prendre une mission et son pays d'accueil comme point de départ analytique, les contributions de ce numéro spécial se concentrent sur la manière dont le maintien de la paix a façonné la sécurité intérieure au Ghana – un contributeur constant de personnel de sécurité au maintien de la paix depuis 1960. Deuxièmement, au lieu de se concentrer sur la composante militaire, l'attention est portée sur le lien entre le maintien de la paix et l'application de la loi, et, ainsi, sur comment le maintien de l'ordre – tel qu'il est effectué par la Police Nationale du Ghana [*Ghana Police Service*] et les forces armées ghanéennes sanctionnées par l'État ainsi que par une série d'acteurs non étatiques – s'entrelace avec les pratiques, les idées et le discours qui peuvent être retracés depuis les déploiements de la mission, et est partiellement façonné par ceux-ci. Sur le plan théorique, le concept d'assemblage est utilisé pour définir la manière dont le maintien de la paix s'étend au-delà des frontières des États et s'entrecroise avec les politiques et les pratiques de la sécurité nationale. Tant au niveau des institutions étatiques que dans le travail quotidien des policiers, les pratiques et les discours de maintien de l'ordre sont constitués par l'assemblage d'une multitude de logiques et d'historicités qui s'intègrent et s'assimilent, mais aussi se contredisent et s'opposent les unes aux autres. Les contributions à ce numéro spécial se penchent sur la manière dont l'expérience du maintien de la paix s'intègre à ces assemblages en constante évolution et les façonne. Les changements peuvent être institutionnels et macro-politiques, mais ils sont aussi souvent profondément personnels et individualisés, avec des implications sur la façon dont le personnel de sécurité perçoit et pratique son rôle.

Mots-clés: maintien de la paix de l'ONU, sécurité, théorie des assemblages, maintien de l'ordre, Ghana

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For decades, the contribution of troops to UN peacekeeping has been one of Ghana's central foreign policy instruments. After independence in 1957, sending troops to the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) in 1960 reflected President Kwame Nkrumah's anti-imperial quest for African self-governance. "African states," he proclaimed, "are capable and better equipped to deal with the great problems of Africa than are the powers outside the African continent" (Nkrumah, 1961:252). For Nkrumah, the Congolese crisis was an opportunity to pursue his tripartite strategy of decolonisation, pan-Africanism and non-alignment in Africa (Gerits, 2015), and peacekeeping presented itself as one possible instrument to translate the strategy into practice (Edu-Afful et al, 2019).

After the Cold War, the expansion and increasing complexity of mission mandates put greater emphasis not only on keeping peace, but also on conflict transformation and, from the turn of the twenty-first century, peace enforcement (Kenkel, 2013:129; Karlsrud, 2015; Sotomayor, 2014). In doing so, the UN responded to analyses in the early 1990s that internal conflict and state collapse were on the rise and constituting a threat to global stability (Abiew & Keating, 1999; Hultman, 2012). As UN peacekeeping evolved, Ghana emerged consistently among the top ten troop contributors to missions. The literature has predominantly emphasised the positive image that Ghanaian troops have garnered abroad among their peers (Mills & Handley, 2001; Albrecht & Podder, 2020). It has explored how the contribution of troops has served national interests by pursuing regional stability (Aning & Aubyn, 2013), and supported depoliticisation of the military (Aubyn et al, 2019), especially with the advent of the Fourth Republic in 1993 that followed over a decade of uninterrupted military rule by Jerry Rawlings. There has also been an emphasis on how troop contributions boost the income of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) as an institution as well as individual officers and soldiers (Hutchful, 1997a:52; Aning & Aubyn, 2013).

The authors of this special issue address an area that has been researched to a lesser extent: How peacekeeping has influenced the provision of security within Ghana's borders, notably by the Ghana Police Service (GPS), but also by the GAF as it has played, and continues to play, an expanding role in numerous internal security operations across the country (Albrecht et al, 2021a).¹ The papers each revolve around the question of how the peacekeeping experience has transformed perceptions of what maintaining law and order means among Ghanaian police and military officers and how domestic order-making reflects practices and both personal and collective experiences from peacekeeping. They also provide insight into how appropriations of discourse and practice from peacekeeping – assembled with and shaped by national and local level politics – have influenced and been fundamentally shaped by Ghana's historical trajectory, including its colonial past.

To an extent, the special issue echoes Sotomayor's (2014) preoccupation with troop-contributing militaries from the Global South, and what kinds of socialising effects engagement in peacekeeping has on them. However, we do not per se focus on correlations between in-mission socialisation of police personnel abroad and becoming "more liberalized and civilianized" at home (Sotomayor, 2014:5). The point of departure of all the papers is less normative and more open-ended. They explore individual and localised sense-making of the peacekeeping experience beyond notions of 'liberalising' and 'civilianising' effects, and in turn how those experiences transform vis-à-vis the social networks, institutions and contexts in which they are embedded as they return home (cf. Fejerskov et al, 2019:24). In this way, the special issue shows how the translation and socialisation of ideas, discourses and practices from a particular experience – peacekeeping – assemble with, are negotiated and shaped by political dynamics in Ghana. These dynamics are not only directed from the national government, but also from a wide range of non-state authorities, such as chiefs, members of local assemblies, civil servants, businesspeople, gangs and vigilante groups. In short, the liberal-democratic and inclusive discourse propounded by peacekeeping, and more mundane practices appropriated through in-mission experiences, intertwine with, and are fundamentally shaped by, existing national and local structures of authority as well as perceptions of what security means (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; see also Abdallah & Aning, 2022; Atobrah et al, 2022).

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By exploring how the peacekeeping experiences of Ghanaian police officers and military personnel shape order-making practices at home, the papers in this special issue shed light on an aspect of peacekeeping that has garnered limited attention in the literature. On the one hand, a comprehensive body of work has grappled with, broadly speaking, the complexities and challenges facing peacekeeping by focusing on the operational effectiveness of missions, relations between military and civilian components, and how to attract enough troops (Adebajo, 2011; Benson & Kathman, 2014; Doyle & Sambanis, 2010). A sub-category of this work represents a more critical and sociologically oriented approach by emphasising relational and spatial dimensions of everyday security in peacekeeping contexts (Edu-Afful & Aning, 2015; Higate & Henry, 2009; Auteserre, 2014). On the other hand, a substantial body of literature focuses on reasons why countries choose to contribute personnel in the first place (Bellamy & Williams, 2013). These reasons include gaining international recognition (Krishnasamy & Weigold, 2003; Beswick, 2010), funding militaries (Cunliffe, 2013; Hutchful, 1997a) and building an identity for their armies (Albrecht & Haenlein, 2015, 2021). Knowledge on the security-related effects of peacekeeping participation is limited to a few fairly recent studies, primarily driven by a focus on the military, that suggest a correlation between peacekeeping abroad and regime instability at home (Dwyer, 2015, 2017; Cunliffe, 2018).

The analysis of how peacekeeping experiences assemble with practices, norms and discourses of security personnel as they return home requires an empirically grounded theory that emphasises local-global connections and co-production of power and authority. In doing so, and to avoid the treatment of the local, national and international as distinct analytical domains, this special issue draws on assemblage theory (DeLanda, 2006; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and specifically the notion of security assemblages (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2011, 2017). The concept helps to challenge the assumption that peacekeeping mainly influences countries that host missions or indeed that that should necessarily be the central focus of analysis. It frames the exploration of how global peacekeeping stretches across state boundaries and intersects with domestic security provision in national institutions and locally in the context of everyday policing. Both at an institutional level, and in day-to-day policing by individual police officers, order-making practice and discourse are constituted by the assembling of a multitude of logics and historicities that partly integrate and assimilate and partly contradict and oppose one another. The contributions to this special issue investigate how the experience of peacekeeping becomes part of and shapes these ever-evolving assemblages. Changes may be institutional and macro-political but are as often deeply personal and individualised, with implications for how police officers perceive and (try to) practice their work (see Albrecht, 2022).

In the remainder of this introduction, I develop the framework within which to read the contributions to this special issue by first expanding on how Ghana's role in peacekeeping and its implications for the country have been debated in the existing literature. This is followed by an exploration of the context of policing in Ghana, which is essential to understand the different types of discourse and practice that are assembled in order-making, including what shapes the peacekeeping experience of police officers – both before they leave and as they return home. I will then expand on the notion of assemblages, and the way it can help steer the analysis of how global security regimes embedded in peacekeeping missions integrate with order-making in the countries that provide troops.

Ghana in peacekeeping

There are many reasons why countries contribute security personnel to peacekeeping (Bove & Elia, 2011; Stojek & Tir, 2015). Apart from gaining international prestige and enabling the promotion of norms and values (Lebovic, 2004), doing so makes space for training and combat experience (Hutchful, 1997a:258). In some cases, it allows a country to export domestic security threats by deploying recruits that could be a source of tension at home in peacekeeping missions abroad (Albrecht et al, 2017; Albrecht & Cold-Ravnkilde, 2020; for Ghana, see Asante, 2020:343). The decision by neighbouring or regional states to contribute troops to peacekeeping missions – such as Ghana in Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone – is motivated by a wish to contain conflict that could spill over into their own territories (Albrecht & Cold-Ravnkilde, 2020; Albrecht & Haenlein, 2016; Aning & Aubyn, 2013; Prouza & Horák, 2015). Since Ghana first sent peacekeepers to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) a few years after independence in 1957, these factors have to different degrees shaped the trajectory of contributions until today (see Aning & Danso, 2020).

In 1960, when Ghana's president, Kwame Nkrumah, engaged politically and militarily in the DRC, it reflected a close relationship with Patricia Lumumba, DRC's new prime minister, as well as his 'grand strategy' of decolonisation, pan-Africanism and non-alignment (Biney, 2011; Edu-Afful et al, 2019; Gerits, 2015; Mohan, 1969). While non-alignment was central to Nkrumah's foreign policy strategy (Sanusi & Adu-Gyamfi, 2017), this

did not mean non-involvement or refusal to take sides in inter-state disputes to which Ghana was not a direct party (cf. Hveem & Willetts, 1973). However, it did indicate an intuitive opposition to military alliances with either the West or the Soviet bloc as they emerged during the Cold War, and a strong belief that problems on the African continent in the period after colonialism should be solved by African states. Nkrumah had reservations about supporting ONUC because he saw the UN as the embodiment of former colonial powers' attempt to maintain Africa in a neo-colonial relationship of dependency and exploitation (cf. Durokifa & Ijeoma, 2018). At the same time, he also assessed that African efforts to solve the DRC crisis would be impossible without the global organisation's engagement (Mwakikagile, 2010:163), and peacekeeping could be a vehicle for Ghana to play a central role as powerbroker on the African continent (Mohan, 1969). In sum, the road was, if not paved, then pegged out for Ghana to become a substantial contributor of troops and police officers.

Both Jerry Rawlings, a military officer who became Ghana's president through a *coup d'état* in 1981 and later agreed to Ghana's transition to democratic rule in 1993, and John Kufuor, his successor (2001–2009), saw peacekeeping as an important domestic and international policy instrument (Prouza & Horák, 2015:220). Rawlings, with his military background, had an intuitive understanding of what motivates military officers, and practically “ran the army from his office,” as one of Kufuor's key advisers has noted (Interview, Accra, Feb 2019), and spent earnings from UN peacekeeping to stabilise his relations with the armed forces (Hutchful, 1997a:52). When Kufuor, the first civilian president of the Fourth Republic, came to power, he too concluded that peacekeeping had an overall positive effect on the army by giving them a focus, and a steady external income that would benefit both the military institution and individual soldiers and officers (Aning & Aubyn, 2013). Indeed, contributing to peace support operations has been seen not simply as beneficial, but “vital for the upkeep of the armed forces” (Aning, 2007:137). Moreover, Clune suggests that military travel, including as peacekeepers, has been a transnational economic strategy within a much broader social imaginary in Ghanaian society, of equating travel with “getting ahead” (2014:286).

Coming from the political class rather than the rank and file of the army, Kufuor saw peacekeeping contributions as part of a broader strategy of fostering good relations with Ghana's neighbours, while stabilising the region. Ultimately, this was a policy of self-preservation: “Very early on,” the adviser to Kufuor cited above explained, “in 2001 [when Kufuor took office], part of the cardinal targets of Kufuor's foreign policy was to build excellent relations in the region – it was a conscious effort to secure the stability of Ghana” (Interview, Accra, Feb 2019). From within the political establishment in Ghana, the possibility of contributing to peacekeeping has been considered to have a stabilising effect on domestic politics and, equally urgently, on a region that was, and still is, experiencing widespread conflict (see Aning et al, 2021). Aning (2007:146) has provided detailed insight into how neo-patrimonial logics – distributing state resources as personal reward – shape the selection of security personnel to participate in international peace support operations and how senior officers demand kickbacks from the junior officers who go, a practice confirmed in numerous interviews with police personnel.

However, due to the importance in Ghana of contributing to peacekeeping, the recognition that comes from doing so internationally (Clune, 2016), and the financial gain that it brings (Prouza & Horák, 2015), analyses of its conditioning effects within Ghana's borders have been overwhelmingly positive. The experience of war and state collapse in countries neighbouring or near Ghana as well as further afield in Rwanda, for instance (Anyidoho, 1997; see also Albrecht & Podder, 2020), has restrained the military hierarchy's desire to engage in politics due to its destabilising consequences. The positive effect of peacekeeping has also been pointed out with respect to civil-military relations. When the UN began to incorporate a conflict-transformation approach into and civilianise its peace support operations during the 1990s (Kenkel, 2013:129), this had knock-on effects on the socialisation of army personnel to greater acceptance of civilian management. Moreover, the proportion of Ghanaian troops that have gone on missions has put pressure on the army to harmonise its own training with what would be expected of international peacekeepers (Levine, 2016).

At the same time, as Beek (2016) shows in his general work on policing in Ghana, there is a sense among police officers that experiences in peacekeeping relating to, for instance, working procedures, gender equality, and respect for human rights, filter into how they perceive and practice their work as they return to Ghana. Indeed, one of Beek's interviewees, a senior police officer – confirming how many officers talked about the peacekeeping experience for the research in this special issue – suggests that policing, in general, is shaped by the experience:

You will not say [...] ‘I am back in my local country so I do things the way Ghanaians do it.’ No. So what I learned there, what I was teaching there, I cannot teach a different thing to my own folks. Because Ghana, too, is a country that believes in the United Nations police regulations.

So, investigations, arrests and riot control, whatever a police man should do, it will be based on international approved laws. (2016:39)

While we mainly focus on the GPS and policing, literature on Ghana's involvement in peacekeeping has been dominated by explorations of the army over the police (Anyidoho, 1997; Erskine, 2000). With respect to experiences of the GPS in peacekeeping, analyses primarily come in the form of policy-related literature or as an element of works that gravitate towards the GAF (Aning, 2007; Aubyn et al, 2015; Ford, 2008). This imbalance reflects the defining role of the armed forces in peacekeeping as well as Ghanaian politics after independence (Hutchful, 1997b), and that contributions to peace support operations partially have become a "diversionary strategy to keep the military from domestic mutinies" (Aning, 2007:138). The greater focus on the military is also reflected in its comprehensive and visible involvement in West Africa's peace support operations during the past 60 years (Aning & Aubyn, 2013:271; Birikorang, 2007).

Because the GAF's role in peacekeeping has dominated the literature, understanding the role of the GPS – and specifically its conditioning effect on policing – is a gap. Yet, it is police officers who are mandated to enforce the law and interact with the population on an everyday basis as they return home. To understand how policing in peacekeeping theatres and Ghana assemble, and serving as a background to the papers in the special issue, I now turn to the way that state-sanctioned policing emerged, and the challenges that the GPS faces as police officers perform their daily duties.

The context of policing (before and) after peacekeeping

The papers in this special issue explore how police officers reflect on their peacekeeping experience, how it has altered their outlook on what they do, and how discourses and practices of participation assemble with and filter into everyday policing as they return to Ghana. Understanding the differentiated effects of peacekeeping on the police and military relates to basic differences between the GAF's and the GPS's roles in peacetime. "Policing," Baker tells us, "Is any organised activity, whether by the state or non-state groups, that seeks to ensure the maintenance of communal order, security and peace through elements of prevention, deterrence, investigation of breaches, and punishment" (2008:5). The police's role in maintaining 'communal order' is defined in contradistinction to the GAF's constitutionally given role of defending Ghana's external borders.

However, the line of separation between army and police is in practice considerably more fluid. This is indicated in, but also very much the result of, the vague language used to describe the GAF's role in Ghana's 1992 constitution. On the one hand, its *raison d'être* is the "defence of Ghana," but on the other hand the army is also expected to take on "such other functions for the development of Ghana as the President may determine." Moreover, the army has been integral to political life in the country, from the mid-1960s up to the Fourth Republic's emergence under Rawlings (Hutchful, 1997a, 1997b) and routinely takes part in the many internal security operations that are carried out across Ghana jointly by the military and police, in some cases informally but also formally with the military in the lead (Albrecht et al, 2021a; Albrecht et al, 2021b; Albrecht & Podder, 2020; Aubyn et al, 2019).

To contain localised outbreaks of violence, successive governments have typically responded by deploying the GPS with back-up from the GAF as needed. Operation Gong-Gong, for instance, is responsible for managing ethnic tensions and conflict. Others, such as Operation Calm Life (see Edu-Afful, 2022), which is active in major urban areas including Accra, Kumasi and Tamale, are intended to curb armed robbery and violent crime. Operation Cow Leg was established in response to tension between farmers and migrating herders in northern Ghana (see Alhassan & Asante, 2022), while Operation Conquered Fist, mainly a counter-terrorism response, has been established to patrol activities on the northern border (Christensen & Edu-Afful, 2019:4; also see Christensen, 2022).

Such operations, of which there are more than a dozen across Ghana, suggest the comprehensive security-related activities that the military engages in. They speak to a blurring of security actors' roles in Ghana that the military hierarchy may try to resist, but with little success due to political pressure from the executive. The operations reflect a general characteristic of security sector management across much of sub-Saharan Africa, namely a wish to utilise the military domestically by the political elite. Observers within the security services indicated in conversations that in the Ghanaian case this is a knock-on effect of a democratisation process that has led to more civilian involvement and direction – and different, not less, politicisation of the security forces than during the era of Rawlings (see Albrecht et al, 2021b). Indeed, interviews carried out inside the GAF and with external observers alike consistently raised concerns that the military's involvement in internal security, as well as its regular interaction with the general population, undermine the GAF's authority and image as incorruptible – just as has been the case with the GPS.

Despite this context of blurred claims to internal order-making, and the GAF's growing role within it, police officers are still the ones who interface with the population on a daily basis, doing patrols, investigating crimes and conducting traffic control. This is one of the reasons why the police remain more susceptible to criticism in comparison to military personnel, disliked and seen as "politicized, too powerful, too brutal, and too corrupt," as Atuguba suggests (2007:5; see also Ayee, 2019; Aubyn, 2022). Osei-Adubofour (2017) suggests that Ghana's post-colonial history of "political meddling" in policing affairs (Aning, 2015; see Adu-Amanfo, 2014) has resulted in the non-investigation of politically motivated crimes by ruling party affiliates, and usage of the GPS to target members of the opposition (see also Sowatey & Atuguba, 2015:88). Simply put, policing practices are as a rule biased in favour of the ruling party. One police officer explains the underlying rationale of this:

The Police Council comprises the president, so who elects the IGP [inspector-general of police]?² It's the president. So, he [the IGP] is going to work in line with his [the president's] instructions and can therefore never be effective. Until the police becomes an independent entity [...] every police officer here in Ghana will work in vain. (Interview, Accra, Nov 2018)

The close link between Ghana's political leadership and the GPS are, like most institutionalised practices, historically embedded. The legal establishment of a police force in Ghana, specifically the Gold Coast Police Force in 1873, was as the name implies integral to British colonial rule. The emphasis was on *force* and the police, paramilitary in composition and approach, became a key instrument in the colonial administration's desire to concentrate power and control the flow of resources. Boateng and Darko argue that because "local [...] people were considered a threat to British rule," they were "suppressed through aggressive policing methods," noting that "the contemporary police force in Ghana is a direct creation of the British colonial powers" (2016:14–15). Tankebe argues along similar lines that "a specialized group of people [...] vested with the responsibility of day-to-day maintenance of law and order" was alien to the Ghanaian context prior to the colonial era (2008:68–69; see also Tankebe, 2009a, 2009b). When the police force was formed, it sought to usurp "traditional socio-political systems" centring on collective responsibility, including family, lineage, and community at large, as well as ancestral spirits and other divinities (ibid; see also, Abdallah & Aning, 2022). While Tankebe may romanticise social order in Ghana prior to colonisation, the police as it emerged certainly constituted "*a specific kind of order*" (2008:69, italics in original), that is, one that supported the worldview and financial interests of the British administration, as was the case across the British empire (Cooper, 2002).

As independence arrived in 1957, this was "less the triumph of ideas and more about the 'circulation of elites'" (Tankebe, 2008:76). The transition from colonial administration to Ghanaian self-determination did not engender a sharp break from regime preserving approaches to policing. Thus, successive police reforms as they were rolled out during the second half of the twentieth century primarily aimed to accelerate its Africanisation and expansion of its operational capacity. The ideological orientation towards a central administration, rather than the population more broadly, was thus carried forward into post-colonial Ghana. Today, one of the greatest sources of criticism of policing in Ghana has been the inability – or more accurately the unwillingness by the executive – to fundamentally disentangle policing from overt political direction. This is combined with a lack of funding for the GPS to carry out its policing role effectively, and a neo-patrimonial logic of seeing public office as an opportunity for private gain, a circumstance that is neither directly linked to the politicisation of policing, nor can be reduced to a simple question of corruption. Nonetheless, the GPS *is* today considered one of the most corrupt public institutions by the Ghanaian public (Ayee, 2019).

Assembling peacekeeping and policing

Policing as a form of order-making is a historical process, generated through conflicting attempts to concentrate power and control the distribution of resources. The concept of assemblage is helpful to capture not if, but how, the peacekeeping experience shapes the way police officers and security personnel more broadly talk about and practice their roles, individually and collectively, when they return home to Ghana. It can help to frame how policing and the GPS undergo institutional change, but also how officers experience peacekeeping as a moment of individualised or personalised transformation. As such, we show in this collection of papers how global peacekeeping practices and experiences assemble with policing practices in Ghana, and

² In fact, it is the vice-president who is the chairman of the Police Council (see Aning 2015:26), but the quote shows the impression – and reality – of political interference in police affairs in Ghana. Certainly, as Aning points out, "the Police Council remains biased towards the political executive and [is] insufficiently independent. Out of the ten members [of the Police Council], eight are appointed by the president" (2015:27).

by extension contribute to broader scholarly debates on entanglements of institutions, actors, practice norms and discourses beyond local–national–international divides.

Drawing on the assemblage theory of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and DeLanda (2006), and Abrahamsen and Williams' (2011, 2017) notion of security assemblages, many of the papers in this collection explore the ways in which security is structured by relations that reach across national boundaries, and tie together the local and the global. In other words, like numerous scholars have done before us, we emphasise the need to reassess state-oriented approaches to security governance. We also question the idea that peacekeeping is mainly of interest for its effects in countries that host missions, rather than the countries that, like Ghana, contribute personnel. Assemblage theory helps to frame how international peacekeeping intersects with domestic security provision within national security institutions, locally in everyday policing practices, and individually as an embodied and deeply personal experience of transformation.

Assemblage theory is an attempt to challenge conceptions of society as an organic whole, meaning that it is constituted by relations, heterogeneity and differences rather than parts, homogeneity and similarities. Deleuze and Guattari (1987), as two of the concept's originators, developed the idea of assemblage as a "general logic" (Nail, 2017), constituting the world through material/expressive elements and territorialising/deterritorialising practices. The "aim is not a totalization," Shaviro explains, "a definitive tracing of limits, or a final theory of everything" (2009:148–9). Rather, Shaviro continues, the assemblage is "an expansion of possibilities, an invention of new methods and new perspective, an active 'entertainment' of things, feeling, ideas and proposition that were previously unavailable to us" (ibid). Within these formations there is a political disposition that captures the possibility of change through "the sound of a contiguous future, the murmur of new assemblages of desire, of machines, and of statements, *that insert themselves into the old assemblages and break with them*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987:83, italics added). The concept supports the framing of the papers in this special issue to articulate not only the configuration of orders at any given time, but also their potential for personal and political transformation. In other words, the notion of assemblage helps us to see the effects of life-changing experiences that serving in peacekeeping missions is to most, if not all, military and police personnel.

One of the strengths of the assemblage as an analytical concept is that it helps to bring some degree of dynamism into the analysis of how order is made by pointing to the unexpected and partly unpredictable ways in which *an*, not *the* order (assemblage) is practiced. Following from this, assemblages are a response to the paradox of *some thing* or something – a practice, a thing, discourse – possessing stasis and change simultaneously. For Deleuze and Guattari, this paradox is solved not by assigning stasis and change to two ontologically distinct properties that happen to come together in a particular form at a particular moment, but by claiming that an assemblage always possesses tendencies toward both stasis and change as the abstract poles of a single continuum (Adkins, 2015:13). In other words, the experience of peacekeeping may indeed produce effects in order-making at home, but not necessarily in ways that produce seismic or abrupt transformations.

DeLanda added to Deleuze and Guattari's concept through his "neo-assemblage theory," explicitly seeking to break with micro–macro – for example, local–global – levels of analysis that were central to Deleuze and Guattari (DeLanda 2006:4). According to DeLanda, this was increasingly important in a globalised world, where 'the local level' could no longer be analysed in isolation from cross–boundary dynamics. This means that in the context of peacekeeping, localised in–theatre experiences – including of hardship, learning through training, everyday practices, and socialisation with other nationalities and worldviews – are embodied, and brought back to Ghana, where they interlink with and form part of, shape and are shaped by everyday policing, including its political dimensions. The distinction between international peacekeeping in South Sudan, for instance, and local policing in Tamale in northern Ghana becomes challenged, because both are embodied by the GPS – individually and institutionally. And yet, of course they are not the same either.

An assemblage's components are involved in different processes that either stabilise (*territorialise*) or destabilise (*de-territorialise*) it, as it is in a constant process of transformation and reorganisation. As such, the whole process serves to enable change and the emergence of new forms (Ong & Collier 2005:12). Assemblages have a fluid status of 'becoming' rather than 'being', where becoming is the process of unfolding the complexity of events in the nebulous space between territorialisation and deterritorialisation of an assemblage. From this perspective, the way we categorise the world by separating it into international, national and local levels creates false and ultimately futile distinctions. The infinitely networked relationships that we seek to separate are essentially inseparable. The notion of the assemblage helps to dissolve dichotomies because neither element exists in pure form to be empirically identified and categorised (see Savage, 2019:3).

Abrahamsen and Williams (2009:3, 2011) have shown how the privatisation of security is part of reconfiguring relations between public and private security provision – and between the local and the global. Global security assemblages constitute processes of disassembly and reassembly within “transnational structures and networks in which a range of different actors and normativities interact, cooperate, and compete to produce new institutions, practices and forms of *deterritorialised security governance*” arrangements (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011:90, italics added). They are “complex hybrid structures that inhabit national settings but are stretched across national boundaries in terms of actors, knowledges, technologies, norms and values” (ibid:95). Along these lines, peacekeeping is not defined by ‘the international’, but rather by the relation between international peacekeeping and policing at home. It is how the peacekeeping experience produces specific imaginaries of and perceived changed practices in policing that are under scrutiny.

In this special issue, assemblage is a point of departure for analysing how peacekeeping affects police officers and military personnel when they return from mission. It helps to capture how peacekeeping is on the one hand a global – and abstract – policy regime with material, practical and discursive consequences for national governments and institutions, and on the other hand an embodied experience by individual soldiers and officers. The effects of peacekeeping are not just manifesting themselves in the countries where missions deploy, but equally have long-term consequences for the countries that contribute the personnel.

Outline of contributions

The special issue consists of seven papers by researchers from the University of Ghana, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Royal Danish Defence College and Danish Institute for International Studies. Each paper revolves around the experiences of Ghana’s security personnel in peacekeeping and how these experiences transpire in their law enforcement roles at home. They are based on qualitative data collected during fieldwork across Ghana in rural and urban settings, from the Northern Region to the Greater Accra Region.

Festus Aubyn provides a methodical and detailed analysis of the discrepancies that exist between the severe criticism of the GPS at home – for being corrupt, politically biased and therefore unable to perform satisfactorily – and the praise that Ghanaian officers consistently receive for their unqualified professionalism when they deploy with peacekeeping missions abroad. The analysis points to the ways in which the two environments of operation differ, despite a degree of osmosis between them, and how these differences condition police officers’ ability to operate in fundamentally different ways.

Peter Albrecht explores the prominent position of community policing in the GPS’ s attempts to reform. He shows the ways that policing and peacekeeping have assembled, and specifically how mission experiences have shaped – in often inconspicuous and individualised ways – the GPS’ s approach to community policing. He argues that the bottom line of any analysis of policing in Ghana is politics, and the colonial roots of the GPS, which shape both internal drives to change and external influences, such as peacekeeping.

Fiiifi Edu-Afful’ s as well as Richard Asante and Osman Alhassan’ s papers focus on a unique and growing aspect of order-making in Ghana: the central role that the GAF has come to play in law enforcement in internal security operations across the country. Between them, the two papers give in-depth insight into three joint police-military operations: Vanguard (to combat illegal mining), Calm Life (to manage violent crime) and Cow Leg (to deal with disputes over grazing rights). The papers show how the money, training and mission experience emanating from international peacekeeping have institutional, policy, operational and political implications at home by facilitating the use of the military for domestic purposes. They also show the often negative implications of using military capacity to enforce the law domestically, both for the communities in which these operations take place and for the image of the GAF itself.

Mustapha Abdallah and Kwesi Aning build their paper around fieldwork in Tamale in northern Ghana, showing the complex network of actors that engage in order-making. The authors argue that, while international peacekeeping practices influence and shape security provision in Tamale, there is also a range of non-state actors that challenge formal security mechanisms. These local leaders, chiefs and community groups make Tamale’ s police officers’ peacekeeping experience if not redundant, then in many instances unimportant. In this area, and across Ghana, it is kinship and local politics rather than international principles of human rights and democracy that have the most significant impact on policing.

Maya Mynster Christensen shows how peacekeeping experiences are translated into and assemble with Ghana’ s response to terrorist threats in a region where jihadist movements continue to proliferate. Ghanaian peacekeeping soldiers have been deployed to Lebanon, Somalia and Mali, three countries that have been affected by terrorist threats and attacks, and the paper explores how these experiences have orientated the

GPS' s response to terrorist threats at home. In doing so, the paper unfolds not only what the government sees as an important and rising threat to Ghana, but also the relational and societal impact of peacekeeping on domestic security.

Finally, the paper by Deborah Atobrah, Benjamin K. Kwansa and Dzodzi Tsikata explores the gendered dimension of conflicts in Africa, the nature of women' s construction of and participation in community conflicts, and what drives that participation. It shows that women in Ghana, who make up a very small proportion of police and military personnel, are also largely excluded from internal conflicts – which are mainly over resources controlled by men – and from the processes of conflict resolution. In this way, the paper reflects indirectly on how international peacekeeping impacts on communal security, and reiterates the importance of including diverse perspectives on matters of security.

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