

# **A Review of Political Economy of the United Nations and other Non-UN Peacekeeping Operations**

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## **Abstract**

Peacekeeping has become an indispensable part of the current world order, the United Nations Organisation and other sub-regional, regional, continental organisations, coalitions, and or alliances. In the peacekeeping operations are politics and economics that altogether determine the success or failure and shape the interests of the various stakeholders in the process. This paper reviews the political economy of peacekeeping in the current globe with focus on the origin, objectives, the dilemma and scope and impacts. It is conceptual study and secondary sources were used to gather data and made documentary analysis. The study reviewed the inherent politics, economics in peacekeeping, and also found new issues enveloped in global peacekeeping operations. The study is significant for the states, international, regional organisations, coalitions, alliances and conflicting parties in understanding the political-economy and dilemma of peacekeeping operations from the United Nations and other non-UN perspectives.

**Keywords: Operation, Political-Economy, Peacekeeping, United Nations Organisation.**

## **Introduction**

Peace is a condition needed by every being to exist, survive and prosper. Likewise, everything that happens is dependent on peace/non-peace situation. Peace does not only determine the success or failure of any and everything, but also affects every human activity which also affects and has significant impact on environment, other non-living things and how, what or where they are. Ever since the creation of humankind and life on earth, peace and conflict have characterized the human existence and then conditioned everything including the environment, history,

development, economics, politics, among others. Different parts of the world, states and societies have at varying times been experiencing both peace and conflict situations, depending on geopolitical circumstances and development, resources disposal, power interests and relations, ethno-religious and other factors. As time changes, nature, character and pattern conflicts also change, while new friends, enemies are being made, issues arise, so also alliances, treaties and conventions are being reached. The World Wars fought between 1914 -1919 and 1939-1945 marked a new crux for the need to have a global peace which was to be reached by all stakeholders, particularly states, both developing and the developed, despite their relativities in political, economic and other interests. The Cold War since after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War took the world precedence and instead of face to face and direct confrontations, the world powers and their cronies, the UN, some international and regional organisations were able to maintain relative international peace, at least at the collective and global level. What replaced violence was therefore, the Cold War, particularly between the United States and the former Soviet Union. However, even during the Cold War period, there were, but limited number of conflicts/wars at the various national, continental and regional levels, and of different dimensions, especially in Africa and Asia, which represented the interest or behind scene competition/rivalry between the then USA and USSR powers. This Cold War trend came to an abrupt end in the early 1990s together with the collapse of the Soviet Union which was the major Eastern power bloc.

The fall of communism and the USSR came with a new hope for the world to have a more and lasting peace and security, but to the contrary, new national, regional, sub-regional, continental political and economic power, interests, conflicts and wars erupted in most parts of the world – Middle-East, Africa, Europe among others (Goodpaster, 1996). This surge of

conflicts prompts the increase of both conventional and non-conventional forces in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in a world characterized by conflicts in all its parts, especially Africa and the Middle-East. In such conflicts, Africa has not only been the most prominent battle ground and wars scene, but also the most prone and the worst hit (Rein. 2015; Brosig & Sempijja, 2016). The annals of conflicts from the former states, empires and kingdoms, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars trickled down to the post-Cold War regional, continental conflicts which necessitated the issues of peacekeeping, especially to the UN, and peacekeeping has been a product of its time and a reflection of the global power configurations (Andersen, 2018). Therefore, peacekeeping, especially under the UN has offered the world a promising peace and stability and created a more central role to the UN (Berdal & Ucko, 2015). This is on the background that over one-third of all the conflicts around the globe are currently taking place in Africa and the same Africa is the largest troops' contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping missions. Similarly, Africa has the largest number of same troops on peacekeeping missions deployed to the African continent.

Overall, the UN has been involved in about 71 Peacekeeping Missions from the year 1948 out of which 53 operations were after 1990, while there are currently 16 other peacekeeping operations carried out in Africa, and the Middle-East, and involving over 100, 000 persons – 85, 808 uniformed troops, 13, 200 Police, 1,738 military observers and annually costing the UN about \$7.87 billion from July, 2016 (Sandler, 2017; United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2016). Earlier in its history, the United Nations had altogether deployed less than 20, 000 troops for peacekeeping missions, but by December, 2015 the figure rose to 107, 088, and for the African Union (AU), its number of highest number of troops deployed to peacekeeping missions reached its peak in the year 2013 with over 40, 000 (Brosig & Sempijja, 2016).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Peace, peacekeeping, and peacekeeping operations have become an indispensable part of the global order that witnesses international, regional, sub-regional and intra-state conflicts since the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union. It is however, accompanied by numerous problems, challenges and prospects amidst the set objectives and successes being recorded. Peacekeeping, apart from being highly expensive, is negatively affected by a number of issues, especially in Africa which involve shortage of finances, political, technical and logistics, and , effects of shifts in global power with the rising influence of China and India (Mampilly, 2018; Beswick, 2014). Questionable modes of the operations, abuses of the peacekeeping principles and free riding in the name of peacekeeping have characterized and dominated the attention of both the belligerents/conflicting parties on one hand and the UN, international organisations, coalitions, regional and continental authorities; the need for peacekeeping is ever increasing around the world, especially in Africa South of the Sahara; there are increasing number of abuses, war crimes which question and threaten the credibility of peacekeeping operations around the world; peacekeeping operations has become a tool for manipulation, subjugation and control of political, military and economic powers of the world; there is the concern over inability of peacekeeping missions and operations to check the abuse of civilians by the belligerents in order to reinforce their conflict gains (Kathman & Wood, 2016); there is a decreasing role of some key contributors to the UN peacekeeping operations, especially Sweden, Denmark and others to UN peacekeeping missions (Nilsson & Zetterlund, 2016; Jakobsen, 2016; Karlsrud, 2016); the international, regional or continental peacekeeping have uncertainty of outcomes and so many nations are reluctant to deploy their military and other personnel for such operations (Goodpaster, 1996); there is also a growing concern and skepticism on the suitability, effectiveness and humanitarian concerns in the peacekeeping operations and whether those who

can win a war can also make good peace (Arbuckle, 2006); allowing the UN led PKO to use force mandate in operations produces long term effects on for the UN and her prestige as an arbitrator (Karlsrud, 2015).

### **Conceptualisation and Review of Literature**

Peacekeeping in in terms of conception and definition determined and influenced by varying factors and to different people, interests and powers – it is influenced by politics, geography and public opinion, material assistance, limits of participation and intervention force (Connaughton, 2017). Meanwhile Peacekeeping is sometimes confused or mistaken for peace enforcement, unarmed civilian peacekeeping and peace operations (Julian & Gasser, 2018). With that, peacekeeping as denoted by Connaughton (2017) is *“the prevention, containment, moderation and termination of hostilities between and within states, through the medium of peaceful third party intervention organized and directed internationally, using multinational forces of soldiers, police and civilians and maintain peace”*, just as peace keeping has two key elements of non-coercion and impartiality (Moskos, 1975).

Similarly, the concept of peacekeeping has limitations, because it is only carried out with consent of the both or all the conflicting/warring parties, while in the case of the United Nations Forces, its peacekeeping forces are not allowed to use force except for self-defense. Sandler (2017) has categorised the UN peacekeeping operation into 4 – traditional peacekeeping; peace enforcement; monitoring and observer mission; and peace building. Traditional peacekeeping, monitoring and observer missions are carried out with the consent of the conflicting parties. Peace building is the most complex part of peacekeeping operations for it involves provision of humanitarian aid, and re-establishment/building of public institutions, long term commitment to nation building, elections, rule of law, legislature, building trust, restore confidence, etc., (Sandler, 2017; DeRouen& Chowdhury, 2016).

On another hand, issues of monetary/material gains arise and there is high profile argument that the UN peacekeeping operations in particular, are a free riding, an enterprise and soft making means, especially to the developing countries being the principal troops contributor to UN peacekeeping operations (Jennings, 2018; Jennings & Boås, 2015), but that has been disputed by Coleman & Nyblade (2018) as being overrated considering the exceptional troops abilities required for such operations, the use of functional equipments and troops contributing states domestic military expenditure. This is in addition to varied income normality between the UN and non-UN peacekeeping operations (Gaibullov, George, Sandler, & Shimizu, 2015).

### **Origin, the Need for and other Motives behind Peacekeeping**

As asserted by Cimbala & Forster (2016), war is a condition of inexact socio-political events that always inflicts difficulties on humankind, and civilians are more affected when conflicts/wars erupt (Walther & Leuprecht, 2015). Peace is therefore imperative to every state and society. Originally, the responsibility of establishing, maintaining and sustenance of peace is rested on authorities of every state and therefore, government settings and structures determine peace in a state and whether peace would last or not (Shields, 2016). The international community is more concerned with and limited to using the military in the times of peacekeeping instead of also during the conflict process such as in the beginning or the peak of such conflicts. Connaughton (2017) has recollected that original peacekeepers in the world history first emerged in 1947 with the United Nations in Greece, and military attaches in Indonesia that were recruited to observe the ceasefire between Dutch and the Indonesian freedom fighters with the UN Peace Administration up to 1992 when there was the establishment of Departments for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Political Affairs (DPA). Prior to then, the UN-led peace operations were only being administered on ad hoc arrangement from the Secretary General's office for

Special Affairs. Establishing the permanent structure for the UN peacekeeping was made with intention of professionalising and strengthening peacekeeping operations with increased and complex capacity to undertake the operations (Andersen, 2018). Between 1990 (the end of Cold War) and 2009, over 60 different peacekeeping operations were carried out in Africa in which the larger number of all the African states have participated at varying degrees (Dwyer, 2015).

The others (non UN peacekeeping operations) are also important in national, regional and international peace moves, but only became significant after the collapse of the USSR and rise of NATO, the eruption of Bosnian and Kosovo wars (Beardsley & Gleditsch, 2015). International peacekeeping has, therefore, limited the occurrence and escalation of wars around the world, crime and violence against humanity, cutting short the lifespan of wars and violence, but has limits in improving human rights (Diehl, Reifschneider, & Hensel, 1996; Gilligan & Sergenti, 2008; Hultman, 2010). Countries participate in peacekeeping operations for varied reasons, including the desire to promote self-interests - upsurge image, power and prestige; or contribute to regional and international peace establishment and maintenance (Koops & Tercovich, 2016; Karlsrud, 2016; Uzonyi, 2015). The need for and participation in peacekeeping is determined by a number of varied interest depending on circumstances, nature and character of the sources/issues in the conflict, the conflicting parties interests, the peacekeepers interest, political, economic and other considerations such as reduced refugees flows, increased trade and commercial activities, reduced health risks, reduced uncertainty, and enhanced resource flow.

The UN peace keeping operations are also influenced by free riding and money making personnel apart from actually achieving the main peace mission objectives, while the non-UN peacekeeping operations are more influenced by public considerations (Passmore, Shannon & Hart, 2018; Nascimento, 2018; Gaibulloev, George, Sandler & Shimizu, 2015; Stojek & Tir,

2014; Jennings, 2018; Brosig, 2017; Uzonyi, 2015). Thus Brosig (2017) and Ward & Dorussen's (2016) assertion of a '*Rentier peacekeeping in neo-patrimonial systems*' which yields both public and private gains. Similarly, the regional management of peacekeeping is more realistic, but has the challenge of political willingness and military capability among the regional states.

### **Peacekeeping Operations, Resource and Objectives**

Peacekeeping operations are complex in that they involve many stakeholders as United Nations, regional organisations, host government, the civilian population, and troops contributing countries, military, and the police (Yamashita, 2016). Peacekeeping operation is also resource (human and material) intensive in addition to its politics, especially after the 1990s (Sandler, 2017; Stojek, 2014; Gaibulloev, George & Sandler & Shimizu, 2015). It is, however, a conflict resolution device with voluntary troop's contribution to UN and other regional and or alliances/coalitions missions (Sandler, 2017). It is necessary to establish peace for the fact that insecurity and conflicts negatively affect development and threaten states, regions and the international community's peace and prosperity, thus requires collective and substantive attention and participation of states and the regions as well as building the military capabilities of states (Beswick, 2014).

### **Scope and Limits of Peacekeeping**

The United Nations Organisation is not a war instrument, thus its activities in this regard, are more concentrated on peacekeeping though there are prospects for improving the roles played in conflicts (Goodpaster, 1996). According to the United Nations (2008:7):

*Today's multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations are called upon not only to maintain peace and security, but also to facilitate the political process, protect civilians, assist in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, support the organization of elections, protect and promote human rights, and assist in restoring the rule of law.*

The United Nations is also limited in peace keeping by the provisions for impartiality, but there are peculiar instances that require prompt response and actions in cases of rape, genocide, ethnic cleansing, etc. which all are heinous and commonly committed war crimes (Goodpaster, 1996). The UN PKO principle is meant to help create the necessary political space to enable the warring parties to reach a political solution themselves (Andersen, 2018). This distinguishes UN peacekeeping mission from peace enforcement and the others. From the 1990s, African state, especially Nigeria and Ghana have become the prominent and lead participating states in peacekeeping missions on the African continent with pioneer African Union peacekeeping Missions in Sudan and Somalia, which have proved both competence of the States in such operations, and imperativeness of peacekeeping in the war tone states (Beswick, 2014). Peacekeeping operation for the workers (military, observers, etc.) is not an easy one considering the issues of *long working hours, routine tasks, stifling bureaucracy, loneliness and homesickness, relative isolation, and dangers associated with the local environment* (Jennings & Boas, 2015). On another note, the regional management of peacekeeping is more realistic, but has the challenge of political willingness and military capability among the regional states. The peacekeeping and MNJTF operations, especially in Africa are limited by financial, technical, political and other factors, and while regional management of peacekeeping is more realistic, it has the challenge of political willingness and military capability among the regional states (Beswick, 2014).

### **Impacts of Peacekeeping Operations**

The use of peacekeeping operations poses threats of uncertainties and divisions among the among member states and within the secretariat of the United Nations (Berdal & Ucko, 2015). There are many unintended consequences of these peacekeeping missions and have ben affecting

the overall objectives of the peace keeping missions such as sexual, child abuse and exploitation, trading in minerals in the conflict areas, mutinies, etc., and specifically, Dwyer (2015) has observed that peacekeeping operations have resulted in mutinies, '*an act of insubordination, in which troops revolt against lawfully constituted authority*', especially in the West African sub-region.

### **The Dilemma of Peacekeeping Operations**

The main and primary goals of peacekeeping are to manage conflicts and resolve them (Dwyer, 2015). However, engaging in such operation inherently results in a dilemma for all the stakeholders – the public, the belligerents, state authorities, the peacekeeping personnel (troops, observers, etc.).

The international, regional or continental peacekeeping have uncertainty of outcomes and so many nations are reluctant to deploy their military for such operations (Goodpaster, 1996). On another dimension, peacekeeping missions also result in injustice among the peacekeepers, domestic mutinies within military organisations because of material grievances, especially West Africa (Dwyer, 2015). It is also argued that peacekeeping operations result in military coups in the peacekeeper contributing states, and thus political systems are exposed to external influences (Cunliffe, 2017). The use of peacekeeping operations are exposed to uncertainties and divisions among the member states and within the secretariat of the United Nations (Berdal & Ucko, 2015). There is also the issue of composition of troops in a peacekeeping missions/operations – whether the soldiers should come from a single country or from a diverse selection from the participating states. This is premised on the fact that diversity is a double-edged sword among the peacekeeping operators (Bove, & Ruggen, 2016; Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007). Therefore, the

extent of heterogeneity in the composition of soldiers in a mission has an impact on the capacity and success of a peacekeeping mission.

There is the predicament of sexual, child, human abuses and exploitation by both UN and other non-UN peacekeepers and there is a great challenge in the aspect of prosecution by states whose personnel are involved in such crimes which often end up with impunity and inaccessibility to justice by the victims of such abuses and exploitation (Odello & Burke, 2016). Connected to those is whether the deployment of peacekeeping operations influence signing peace agreements between conflicting parties or there is any relationship between signing peace agreement and deployment of peacekeeping operators. It is, in line with that, arguably asserted that decision to send peacekeepers does not very much influence the combatants to sign peace agreements, but rather, internally related factors, but not pressure from the outside world (Tiernay, 2014). Sandler (2017) has identified marrying two key issues of burden sharing (finances, troops, other logistics, etc.); and effectiveness (ability to achieve specific, and general objectives and benefits of such operations, which include maintaining peace and protection of the lives, among others) as critical to every peacekeeping operation and whether led by the United Nations or the other regional/alliance/coalitions.

Beardsley & Gleditsch (2015) have all the same asserted that peacekeeping operations significantly reduce geographic scope of violence, but enable non-state actors to gain both *strength* and *legitimacy*, but which result in the non-state actors becoming future threats in an event where peace deals are not reliably reached. Dwyer (2015) has observed that peacekeeping operations have resulted in mutinies, '*an act of insubordination, in which troop's revolt against lawfully constituted authority*', especially in the West African sub-region. There are many unintended consequences of these peacekeeping missions and have been affecting the overall

objectives of the peace keeping missions such as sexual exploitation, trading in minerals in the conflict areas, mutinies, etc., (Dwyer, 2015).

Similarly, there is income normality among the non-UN peacekeeping missions, while the UN peacekeeping missions increase and some states are specialists in the supply and deployment of troops for UN missions as a means of money making, and less responsive to spillover effects on the peace operation personnel (Gaibullov, et al., 2015). There is also a dilemma in attainment of the political purposes to be achieved, the long term strategic direction and objectives of the missions to be achieved which are intertwined with particularistic interests of the troops, major powers, and the operations financiers' interests, and are tied to resource constraints and capabilities to undertake the numerous peacekeeping operations (Berdal & Ucko, 2015). The changing dimensions and emerging tasks before the peacekeepers have present another predicament to the peacekeeping operations across the globe, especially with increased factionalisations among the conflicting parties, incoherence in interests and terms of agreement and increased proliferation of weapons among the conflicting parties which is on daily basis.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Peacekeeping is indispensable to the current trends on the globe. The quest establishment and maintenance of peace has not been an easy one and does not seem to be easy in future in view of the escalation of conflicts around the world and the increasing need for peacekeeping operations especially on the United Nations Organisation and other Regional and continental organisations of states. The dilemma of peacekeeping operation is a huge one and needs the attention of both the United Nations and all the other stakeholders in peace making. The scope of peacekeeping also has some gaps that need to be filled, especially with the rising number of conflicts and dynamism of the peacekeeping operations over time, geography and political undertones. While

is not possible to discern peacekeeping from the political-economy of self-serving interests, it is pertinent that the system needs to be made more dynamic and the stakeholders more responsive to the main objectives of peacekeeping operations.

Closer harmony between the UN and other non-UN peacekeeping operations by the various organisations states would have to be addressed so as to reduce the extant challenges in the wave of peacekeeping operations across the globe – sexual, child, labour, human abuses and exploitations, illegal trade in mines, injustice to the peace keeping workers by some top authorities, the epidemic of free ride/enterprise in peacekeeping, shortage of human and material resources, and late/delayed responses to the needs for such operations among others.

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