

Civil-Military Relations in Ghana: 1993 -2017

Abel Nartey

Ghana Military Academy and Training School, Teshie, Accra

Abstract

Civil-military relations in Ghana has followed a checkered pattern since independence. Efforts to establish a workable civil-military relations in the first three republics failed to work. It is only in the Fourth Republic that, the military seem to demonstrate commitment to the constitutional order (Diamond, 2005). It is, therefore, important to establish that the military now take their subordination to civilian leaders as appropriate and that democratic norms are forming among the military. The study used qualitative research design to examine these issues. The findings show that democratic norms are forming among the military which does acknowledge that democratically elected leaders must rule. There is, moreover, institutional learning by the Ghanaian military about the not very impressive role in politics. This and other elements like a functioning democracy, the Rawlings factor, and the ability of elections to mediate the main conflict in the Ghanaian society in the Fourth Republic are to explain the current civil-military relations in Ghana.

Keywords: civil-military relations, Ghana, fourth republic, institutional learning, democratic deepening

DOI: 10.7176/RHSS/9-14-13

Publication date: July 31st 2019

Introduction

The Fourth Republic of Ghana is stabilizing in its democratic governance. This is evident in the conduct of seven relatively free and fair elections since 1992, with three political turnovers in 2000, 2008 and 2016. This marks a clear departure from the three previous republics which were overthrown by the military. Democratization is, thus, a dominant feature of Ghana's Fourth Republic. However, Sandbrook and Oelbaum (1999) argued that democratic governance in Ghana's Fourth Republic has hardly reformed the institutions of the Ghanaian state and that neo-patrimonial politics remained dominant. This is considered a structural problem which emanates from the design of the constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana. Meanwhile, the incidents of three political turnovers create the impression that the Armed Forces of Ghana has been placed under democratic authority (Kohn, 1997). Is democratic control of the military becoming a norm in Ghana's body politic?

The design of the fourth republican constitution is seen as creating a hegemonic president, due to the overwhelming nature of the appointing powers of the president with respect to the public service of Ghana (Gyimah-Boadi, 1994, 2010; Prempeh, 2008). The constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana empowers the president to appoint all the political leaders of the public service of Ghana and several administrative heads. The president appoints over eighty percent of the members of the Armed Forces Council (Republic of Ghana, 1992). Article 211 of the Fourth Republican constitution of Ghana establishes the Ghana Armed Forces Council which consists of the Vice-President; The Ministers responsible for defence, foreign affairs and internal affairs; The Chief of Defence Staff; the Service Chiefs and a senior Warrant Officer or its equivalent in the Armed Forces; and two other persons appointed by the President, acting in consultation with the Council of State. Article 212 also gives the president power to appoint, acting in accordance with the advice of the Armed Forces Council, the Chief of Defense Staff of the Armed Forces, the Service Chiefs, and officers of the Armed Forces who shall be given such command as the Armed Forces Council shall determine.

With the exception of the senior Warrant Officer on the Armed Forces Council, the President appoints all the other members on the council. It should be stated that the president is mandated to consult with the Council of State in the execution of this duty. This institutional arrangement virtually politicizes the Armed Forces Council because it clearly leaves room for partisan interests (Gyimah-Boadi, 2010). Can the structure of the military be said to have played any role in what this study at this initial moment refers to as stabilizing civil-military relations?

It is argued that the nature and performance of public sector organisations are crucial elements in determining the developmental capacities of states (Turner, Hulme, & McCourt, 2015). However, process theorists argue that the nature and performance of the public sector are a manifestation of the character and capacity of the state (Leftwich, 2008). It is, therefore, the character and capacity of the state which determine a state's developmental capacity and the capacity of the state is, in turn, a function of its politics.

The two arguments above by Turner et al. (2015) and Leftwich (2008) relate to the debate about politics-institution nexus (March & Olsen, 1984). Which of the two, politics or institutions, is responsible for institutional outcomes? What impacts, therefore, have the structure of the Ghana Armed Forces and the politics of the governments of the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party had on civil-military relations in the Fourth Republic of Ghana, 1993-2017?

The problem of the study, therefore, emanates from the debate about politics-institution nexus referred to above (March & Olsen, 1984). Has the constitution of the fourth republic of Ghana established and, therefore, maintained democratic control over the Ghana Armed Forces, or is it rather the (democratic) politics of the Ghanaian state which has effectively placed the Ghanaian military under civilian control? Does the Ghana Armed Forces effectively execute their duties to defend Ghana and any other duty that the President may determine (Republic of Ghana: 1992, Article 210/3)? The defence duty of the Ghana Armed Forces is operationalized in this study to include not only defence against external aggression but also to uphold the democratic regime as established in the constitution of the fourth republic of Ghana.

The study investigates the paradox of a stable democratic politics in the Fourth Republic of Ghana in which the constitution potentially introduces partisan politics into the military (Gyimah-Boadi, 2010.). Specifically, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Has the politics of the fourth republic of Ghana successfully established norms of civilian control over the Ghanaian military given that the constitution of the fourth republic of Ghana, *de jure*, politicizes the military institution?
2. What are the causal elements responsible for the current state of civil-military relations in Ghana and their potential to make the military submit to civilian authority?

Theoretical Framework

The literature of state building and state effectiveness essentially emphasizes either the policy process or the structure and orientation of public bureaucracies as the main agent of change (Leftwich, 2008; Turner et al., 2015). This segment of the study develops two conceptual frameworks and then proceeds to establish a point of convergence between them. The frameworks are the public bureaucracy model (Turner *et al.*, 2015), and the political process model (Leftwich, 2008).

The Public Bureaucracy Model

The way the public bureaucracy is structured in any country and the contextual elements there are responsible for the way the relevant country's public sector is managed (Turner et al., 2015). This understanding brings out the significance of the Weberian "ideal type" model (Handley & Mills, 2001, Turner et al., 2015). The Weberian model serves as an analytical model, a comparative tool by which one can assess the degree and form of bureaucratization in a society. It sought to rationalize the collective activities which characterize the modern society, by introducing professionalism into the public service. According to Handley and Mills, the model emphasizes, among others formal rules, a formal division of labour, hierarchically structured offices, and meritorious mode of recruitment.

According to Turner *et al.* (2015), the structuring of the bureaucracies tends to be dominated by two orientations: one in which appointed administrators wield much power vis-à-vis elected politicians, and the other in which the power of elected politicians trumps the appointed administrators. The second represents *de jure* politicization of the public bureaucracy with the aim of empowering elected politicians to be able to oversee the implementation of the policies formulated out of their party manifestoes. Turner *et al.* refer to the 1977 World Development Report which establishes a positive impact of the public bureaucracy on economic growth in developing countries. The report emphasizes meritorious mode of recruitment as most significantly impacting on economic growth, followed by promotion from within and career stability in that order.

The Political Process Model

Leftwich argues that the forms and outcomes of political process in any political system "are both framed by, and help to shape, the structural environment, internal and external, the distributions and balances of power, ideas, ideologies, interest and, crucially, the formal and informal institutions through which they all work" (Leftwich, 2008: 5). This position underscores the primacy of politics and how it inter-relates with institutions in the life of any human community. Leftwich also emphasizes that the survival and prosperity of these communities are contingent on their ability to establish mechanisms for taking authoritative public decisions

about the production, distribution and use of resources (generally defined to refer to anything which could be utilized to advance people's interest, material or ideal).

People essentially disagree about how life should be organized collectively for the benefit of all members of the community. Citizens in a political system need not necessarily share common political values and beliefs. There are, therefore, political subcultures in political systems (Diamond, 2005). What system of government should be put in place and who should occupy which office and why? How should resources, in general, be distributed? Politics, in this manner, fundamentally involves the "phenomena of conflict and cooperation" and people do not necessarily agree on issues bothering on collective life, and, especially, on how the community should be organized in terms of government. However, in order to ensure the survival and prosperity of the community, they recognise the need to cooperate with others.

This study, therefore, conceptualizes politics as involving activities which relate to the making of collective decisions about resource use. These activities involve conflict and cooperation. This conception of politics leans very much on definitions of politics which all emphasize conflict, competition for power, and the ability to influence collective decisions (Brewster, 1963; Easton, 1953; Jackson & Jackson, 1997).

The study's conception of politics emphasizes public decisions in the sense that such decisions involve and affect the majority of people (if not all) in the state. It, therefore, seeks to establish a distinction between the public and the private spheres. In this understanding, public decisions are expected to bind all members of the state, whereas private decisions do not bind anyone outside of the group (including families, and voluntary associations) involved. Again, the conception of politics in this study indicates that politics is authoritative, and that formal power is inherent in the processes involved in the making of the decisions. The decisions so made, therefore, become binding for all members of the political community (the public), and are authoritative in that coercion may be applied to ensure compliance.

The argument in this study is, therefore, that the behaviour of public organisations and their outcomes are essentially the outcomes of politics and its interplay with institutions, the level which concerns the rules of the game—the emergence and legitimation (or institutionalization) of the rules of the game or institutions—and the level at which games within the rules occurs, the application of the rules in real life cases (emphasis mine).

Politics (or the political process), therefore, helps to shape the structural environment in which societal activities occur and these activities, in turn, shape politics (March & Olsen, 1984). In some polities (the stable ones), the process has engendered a settled consensus on the basic political rules as well as the rules of the game. This refers essentially to the basic institutions of the state (the constitution of state).

Convergence of the Models

The two models converge in the second one, the political process model. The convergence manifests in the understanding that the behaviour of public organisations and their outcomes are essentially the outcomes of politics and its interplay with institutions, the level which concerns the rules of the game—the emergence and legitimation (or institutionalization) of the rules of the game or institutions—and the level at which games within the rules occurs, the application of the rules in real life cases.

Research Methodology

This section outlines the methodology used for the study. The section highlights the research design, sources of data, data collection tools, sampling and sampling techniques and analysis of data.

Research Design

The research design is qualitative and exploratory with. This design is selected to explore the growing phenomena of politics-administration nexus and their impact on public organisations with particular reference to the Ghana Armed Forces. Qualitative research is by definition exploratory. That is, qualitative research facilitates the collection of detailed information from individuals and groups and then generates case studies and summaries rather than lists of numeric data (Creswell, 2013). This study focuses on individual members of the Ministry of Defence of Ghana.

Sources of Primary Data, Population, Sampling Technique and Sample

The data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Specifically, politicians, political science lecturers, senior and junior bureaucrats from the Ministry of Defence, senior and junior officers of the Ghana

Armed Forces, non-commission officers, publications from journals, textbooks and the mass media (both print and electronics) were the sources from which the data for the study were collected.

In this study, the population covered the following groups: the staff of the Ministry of Defence; politicians who occupied one of the following offices: president, vice president and minister of defense; members of the Ghana Armed Forces, and political science lecturers.

In this study, purposive sampling was selected because it enabled the selection of unique respondents as outlined above. The primary consideration of this method was to zero in on individuals who have personally experienced civil-military politics. Moreover, there was the need to get respondents known to the researcher or introduced to the researcher by someone who could assure the respondents about the dignity of the researcher and hence his ability to keep the identity of the respondent confidential.

Regarding the sample size, twenty respondents were engaged in the interviews and twenty engaged in focus group discussions in the data collected for this study. The twenty non-commissioned officers of the Ghana Armed Forces participated in the focus group discussion. The focus group discussants were divided into three groups, with two of the groups consisting of 7 members each, and the third group consisting of 6 members. In sum, the population comprised two politicians, two political science lecturers, three senior bureaucrats from the Ministry of Defense, three junior bureaucrats from the Ministry of Defense, Five senior officers of the Ghana Armed Forces, Five junior officers of the Ghana Armed Forces, and twenty non-commission officers of the Ghana Armed Forces.

Data Collection, Processing and Analysis Procedure

The study used in-depth personal interviews and focus group discussions as data collection methods. The interviews did not follow any specified set of questions, neither were questions asked in any specified order. The respondents were asked to tell their stories on all the issues raised in this study which are:

- Authority relations in the Ghana Armed Forces and how this affected professionalism in the forces in the fourth republic of Ghana,
- Relationship between the top civilian members of the Ministry of Defence and members of the military command,
- Civil-military politics in the Ghana Armed Forces in the fourth republic of Ghana,
- The incidence of norm formation about democratic control of the military among members of the military.

There was the need to ask follow-up questions so as to get clarification on some issues and (in the case of others) get additional details. The data collection methods selected for this study are most suitable for this study for several reasons. Firstly, the respondents have actually gone through the experience relevant for this study. The use of non-structured interviews ensured that various respondents tell their own story. The liberties granted respondents allowed them to provide their own definitions of situations as they experienced them and provide most detailed information. The interviews were recorded on audio tapes and later transcribed and coded. Three focus group discussions were conducted. There were seven people in two groups and six in one of them. The researcher moderated the discussions himself and was guided by prepared questions.

The information gathered from the interviews were transcribed each day immediately after the interviews and stored in computer files. When the interview of any particular group ended, the transcripts were thoroughly read in their entirety to grasp the sense of the interview as a whole and then broken into parts, in terms of relevant themes before the next group interview got done. The objective was to get as thorough as possible an understanding of the data. The reading of interviews thoroughly and their breaking into parts constitute the initial categories of the data processing. The transition of the data in parts to their organization into themes and subthemes involves detailed understanding of the data, their analysis and interpretation in light of the researcher's view and the "views of perspectives in the literature" (Creswell, 2013: 184). This analysis was followed by deductive analysis to gather evidence to support the themes and their interpretations. Finally, the findings were discussed in the framework of the researcher's personal view, the existing literature, and the "emerging models that seem to adequately convey the essence of the findings" (Creswell, 2013: 52).

Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and discussion of the data collected. The analysis is presented with regards to the research questions. The findings are discussed making reference to secondary data.

Has the Politics of the Fourth Republic of Ghana Successfully Established Norms of Democratic Control over the Ghanaian Military?

Civilian control, essentially, is thus a normative issue which rests on a set of ideas, institutions, and behaviors that has developed over time in democratic societies (Hutchful, 1997a, 1997b; Koln, 1997). The constitutions of states and the general societal norms provide the main sources of norms which guide social behavior broadly defined to include political and economic behavior (Diamond, 2005; Gyimah-Boadi, 2010; Hutchful, 1997a; Koln, 1997; Prempeh, 2008).

The fourth republican constitution of Ghana establishes a de jure democratic control over the military in much the same way that the earlier three republics which failed did. The implication here is that it is one thing establishing structures in a constitution; it is another getting the constitution to become the norm which really guides actions and inactions (Hutchful, 1997a; Prempeh, 2008). The analysis in this segment of the study is done from the following perspectives: constitutional provisions and the governing structure of the military, controls through governmental institutions, and civil society oversight. The analysis makes use of both primary and secondary data collected for the study.

Constitutional Provisions as the Governing Structure of the Military

Article 210 of the 1992 Constitution states that there shall be the Armed Forces of Ghana which shall consist of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and such other services for which provision is made by Parliament. The command structure puts the President at the very top. He or she, by the constitution, is the Commander-in-Chief (CIC) of the Armed Forces, although this title is not used in the fourth republican constitution. This is followed by the Armed Forces Council which happens to be the highest decision taking body. This body comprises the Vice President who is the Chairman of the Council, the Ministers of Defence, Interior and Foreign affairs, the Chief of Defence Staff, the various Service Commanders, the Forces Sergeant Major (FSM) and two other appointees appointed by the president in consultation with the Council of State. The Minister of Defence follows in the chain of command. After the Minister of Defence, the Chief of Defence Staff then the Service commanders completes the structure.

Furthermore, there are other appointments that fill the gap in the event the above stated structure is not available. These include the General Officer Commanding at the various commands. This relates to the Northern, Central and Southern Commands. In accordance with an official statement issued on Wednesday, 22 March, 2000 by the Secretary to the President, the commanders of the 1st Infantry Brigade Group in the south and the 2nd Infantry Brigade Group in the north were appointed General Officers Commanding the Southern and the Northern Commands of the Ghana Army respectively (Daily Graphic 23rd March 2000). This arrangement was reviewed in 2015 when a third command was introduced. This meant that the Ghana Army now has Northern, Central and Southern Commands all headed by General Officer Commanders.

The adequacy and effectiveness of such measures has been questioned, however, especially during the eight-year civilian rule of President Rawlings and the NDC. According to one respondent, the “presence and influence of the military...remained strong and visible” as far as civil-military relations is concerned (Fieldwork, 2018). In the eight-year rule of President Rawlings, serving military officers were appointed to government positions, and soldiers continued to engage in partisan politics (Agyeman-Duah, 2002; Hutchful, 1997a). Additionally, Rawlings continued to rely on the personal loyalty of one section of the military, the specially trained and better equipped 64th Regiment, as an instrument of control both within the military and of the civilian population. Rawlings thus “seemed more committed to upholding the supremacy of the military and its abrasive tradition than subjecting the institution to democratic control” (Agyeman-Duah, 2002: 10).

When President Kufuor assumed office in 2001, one concern was the response of the Armed Forces and whether it would respect constitutional rule, given its association with the NDC. The NPP government introduced reform packages with the main objective of making the military truly professional and a politically non-partisan institution. The reforms of the military included the banning of the ACDR and all other political organizations from the barracks. Soldiers were withdrawn from policing duties, where brutalities against civilians tended to occur most; the 64th Regiment was redeployed on international peacekeeping duties; facilities at barracks have been upgraded and retirement conditions improved (Agyeman-Duah, 2002).

Additionally, the Minister of Defense has aimed at strengthening civil-military relations through encouraging interaction between the military and civil society, with dialogue taking place in public seminars and forums (Agyeman-Duah, 2002). As noted by Agyeman-Duah, the mechanisms to achieve this goal include seminars between senior military officers and media representatives, one of which was held in May 2001. Furthermore, a series of public forums for civilians and all ranks of military personnel were held in the six regional capitals with garrisons in June and July 2001.

The data collected on civil-military relations in the fourth republic of Ghana further indicate that gradual progress continues to be made to bring the military under democratic control. The gains made between 1993 and 2008 under Presidents Rawlings and Kufour continues to be consolidated under subsequent governments. The Ministry of Defence continues to be the main governing structure, with the Minister, a civilian in charge. The reality, however, depicts a case of collaboration between civilian counterparts of the Ministry of Defence and the Ghana Armed Forces. The traditionally weak ministerial control has been improving. For example, the sensitive issue of Ministerial financial responsibility for the Armed Forces is currently reinforced. The defence budgets are prepared by the Finance Ministry with inputs from the military officers. The civilian members of the Ministry of Defence also control procurement issues.

A degree of control through the legislature and judiciary also exists. Parliament's oversight role is implemented mainly through the Select Committee on Defence, given responsibility for generally overseeing the military, including review of its annual budget. It is stated, however, that this function is executed mechanically and not subjected to parliamentary scrutiny. This finding ties in with the finding of an earlier study which then established that the same scrutiny was "yet to be fully realized" (Agyeman-Duah, 2002: 20), due largely to a paucity of capacity, including a lack of material and human resources.

The broader watchdog role of civil society is also important. Just as the long period of military rule stunted the growth in civil society in Ghana, equally, the opening up of democratic space in the past decade has enabled civil society organisations to flourish, including a sub-section that has taken a special interest in civil-military matters (Agyeman Duah, 2002), with the media particularly important as a watchdog on military affairs.

The Military's own Institutional Learning

The members of the military interviewed have experienced life under both military and civilian leadership and are in a position to compare which of them attended to their needs. Under Jerry John Rawlings' rule, the military has the experience of life under both military and civilian leadership. Their conclusion is that, in the fourth republic, their needs are better taken care of by the civilian leadership.

Some of the members of the military interviewed believe that the Armed Forces generally receive a better deal at the hands of civilian governments. The irony in the role played by President Rawlings in stabilizing is that the military resent the instruments used. Some of the members of the military interviewed accuse Rawlings of employing undemocratic approaches in his control of the military during his tenure.

The officers interviewed resent the persistence use of subjective controls by the Rawlings government, especially the maintenance of special security units, the suppression of public debate and lack of dialogue. The focus group discussants were not necessarily resentful of the practices but viewed them as unnecessary. The civilian members among the respondents also complained of executive dominance and relative marginalization of Parliament, and attempts to militarize what have traditionally been civilian institutions of law and order by the Rawlings government (Fieldwork, 2018). This confirms the findings by Hutchful (1997a: 266) who argues that "in reality the Ministry of Defence has essentially been the Ghana Armed Forces, and traditionally ministerial control has been weak or non-existent."

The Military and Democratic Deepening in Ghana

Diamond (2005) discusses democratic consolidation as a state in a democracy when the elites in society and the mass public generally accepts democratic system of government as the only game in town. He adds that one of the three generic tasks that all democracies must perform if they are to consolidate is democratic deepening. He argues that democratic deepening makes the institutions of state "more liberal, accountable, responsible and representative" (p. 112). A major challenge which comes out of this in relation to nascent democracies is "to reduce the autonomous and democratically unaccountable power of the military" (Diamond, 2005: 113). However, as discussed above, democratic control of the military is a normative issue which rests on a set of ideas, institutions, and behaviors that has developed over time in democratic societies (Hutchful, 1997a, 1997b; Kohn, 1997).

Following Leftwich (2008), it is argued here that the politics of states are responsible for the translation of the ideas and institutions into normative forms for both the military and the democratic political leadership. The actions of the military which serve to deepen democracy include their acknowledgement of the democratic regime as the only game in town. The study, therefore, tested the Ghanaian military's acknowledgement and acceptance of democracy as the preferred system of government.

The members of the military who participated in the focus group discussions converged on democracy as the preferred system of government. They came to this conclusion after reviewing Ghana's political history and analyzing the current social, economic and political environment. They juxtaposed current conditions against their knowledge of pre-fourth republic conditions and came to the conclusion that they prefer the current democratic dispensation. This understanding was re-echoed by the officers interviewed. They believe that Ghanaian politics has "calmed down" in the fourth republic and this achievement is not to be taken for granted (Fieldwork, 2018). They, however, acknowledged that democracy "is a good system" and must be made to work. By this, they further explained that there are challenges in the way Ghana's democratic politics is functioning. They cited accountability as the main challenge encountered by the current democratic dispensation.

When asked to talk about the institution of state better placed to lead the management of the affairs (governance) of the Ghanaian state, both the focus group and the officers interviewed did not include the military as an institution. The officers, however, added individual military officers as also having the capacity to contribute significantly to the governance of the state. The focus group discussants and the interviewees cited political parties as better placed to lead the governance of the country, although they quickly added corruption in political parties.

Questions were further asked about the involvement of the military in politics. The ensuing discussions focused on the performance of past military governments and the fortunes of the individual officers and men who were active participants in those governments. The discussants frankly acknowledged that, like the civilian governments the military overthrew, the military governments formed afterwards ended up to amass wealth. They could not agree as to the nature of the PNDC, as being a military regime or a civilian one. Some added it to the military regimes of the past; others called it civilian regime with massive military support. The discussants were not particularly proud of the fortunes of the officers and men who were part of former military regimes.

The officers interviewed were very critical of past civilian regimes and defended the involvement of the military in politics. They were of the view that the military was "drawn into Ghanaian politics for the first time" in the coup that ousted the first republic (Fieldwork, 2018). They added that they did the honorable thing by not deciding to stay. They, at the same time, were categorical that the military as an institution should not take over the management of the state. They added that they feel proud much more with their retired colleagues who manage the resources they acquire through peace-keeping than those who participated in politics. They added that, while they see honour in the lives of the first group who did not participate in politics, they see retired members of the military who were in government as being in some sort of continuous conflict with society.

The discussion above indicates that the constitutions of democratic politics structure the political institutions such that the military is subordinated to the civilian authorities (Huntington, 1957; Hutchful, 1997a; Kohn, 1997). However, there is no in-built mechanism in constitutional arrangements that works to ensure compliance of the constitutional provisions of democratic control of the military. The political leadership of the relevant state has to generate such mechanisms.

Asked to talk about what would keep the military out of politics, the response was a call for the "system to work" for the democratic politics to boost the image of the military in society. The discussants in the focus group discussion were mainly concerned about their economic security. "You see all the brouhaha in the past about coups were about money matters; everybody is concerned about how they can cater for their families", a discussant expressed to which the others agreed.

The officers examined this issue from a different angle. They argued that the experience they have from peacekeeping indicates to them that economic issues are at the heart of many conflicts in Africa. "The life of an army officer is such that when the economy is bad he faces challenges beyond economic matters. It brings in issues of status and pride", an officer concurred. This position of the officers reflects Diamond's (2005) argument about the need to enhance the socio-economic security, honour and status of the military in (the Ghanaian) society.

Article 210/3 establishes the functions of the Ghana Armed Forces as follows: "The Armed Forces shall be equipped and maintained to perform their role of defence of Ghana as well as such other functions for the

development of Ghana as the President may determine.” This is further interpreted to be the maintenance of Ghana’s internal security, defense of the sovereign and territorial duty of Ghana, and to be prepared to take part in regional and international operations subject to national objectives.

As stated earlier, the defence duty of the Ghana Armed Forces is operationalized in this study to include not only defence against external aggression but to uphold the democratic regime as established in the constitution of the fourth republic of Ghana. Has the military voluntarily accepted these roles of theirs as established in the constitution of the fourth republic of Ghana? What evidence is there to confirm this beyond their de facto withdrawal from political activities in the fourth republic of Ghana?

Members of the military interviewed and those that participated in the focus group discussion are very clear in their minds what their core functions are. They readily mentioned defence of the Ghanaian state as their core function, and this has traditionally been interpreted to refer to defence against external threats. They, however, added that they are also to defend the state against internal threats. The officers interviewed argued further that there used to be some confusion with the interpretation of the nature of the internal defence. One officer indicated that: “The military always feels challenged as to what to do when politicians begin to impose themselves on the state. You wonder whether you shouldn’t intervene to restore the established political order, I mean constitutional rule” (Fieldwork, 2018).

The analysis above confirms earlier studies about the civil-military in Africa and elsewhere. They lend support to the state and, for that matter, the regime to the extent that the regime functions to provide protection for their status and security. General Ocran’s candid acknowledgement of this understanding stated above should be reproduced here since it clarifies the issue. He famously stated that “in Africa, a contented army, however small, is a pillar of security and economic growth”.

Huntington’s (1957) theory of “objective civilian control” of the military is most profound. He asserted that the state should encourage “an independent military sphere” so that “multifarious civilian groups” would not “maximize their power in military affairs” by involving the military in political activity. Such interference, he believed, not only diminished the effectiveness of military forces and thus a nation’s security, but actually invited the military to involve itself in governance beyond national security affairs. An officer corps focused on its own profession (and granted sufficient independence to organize itself and practice the art of war without interference in those areas requiring technical expertise) would be politically neutral and less likely to intervene in politics. The paradox of Huntington’s formulation is that while “objective” civilian control might minimize military involvement in politics, it also decreases civilian control over military affairs. This establishes a situation where politics is separated from administration and authority is separated from responsibility.

The Ghanaian military, like their counterparts in both mature and nascent democracies, seem not to have issues with the concept and practice of civilian control of the military. However, as Bahadur (2016: 1) has indicated “in a democracy the military should be under political control, but doesn’t have to be under bureaucracy’s thumb”. Democratic control of the military implies the paradox of Huntington’s formulation that while “objective” civilian control might minimize military involvement in politics, it also decreases civilian control over military affairs (Kohn, 1997).

When the army officers interviewed as part of this study talk about the need for them to be able to keep a modicum of dignity in their social life, the implication is essentially that the democratic system must work effectively. This does not mean that new democracies should transform the challenging political and economic situations of the systems they inherited overnight. At the minimum, they should demonstrate that they are fixing the system. As argued by Kohn (1997), civilian control can reinforce democracy, but civilian control is only one aspect—necessary but not sufficient—of democratic rule. The democratic leadership must commit themselves to the rules of the game normatively and behaviorally. There is no time dimension to manifest demonstration that one means business.

Regime legitimacy also implies that the government and the processes of governance are in conformity with the rules of the political and economic game (Kohn, 1997; Leftwich, 2008). This renders the system legitimate in the eyes of both the elites and the mass public. Without a stable and legitimate governmental system and process, the military may interfere in order to protect society from chaos, internal challenge, or external attack, even when intervention may itself perpetuate instability and destroy legitimacy in government. To the extent that soldiers accept the principle of civilian control in the aftermath of military government, they do so in a diluted, conditional manner. Future takeovers are a ‘thinkable’ possibility, depending upon the actions of the civilian governors” (Hutchful, 1997a; Kohn, 1997).

What are the Causal Elements Responsible for the Current State of Civil-Military Relations in Ghana and Their Potential to Make the Military Submit to Civilian Authority?

Democracy cannot be wished into place, and neither can good governance (Leftwich, 2008). Leftwich continues that it is rather the politics of states which establishes and institutionalizes such procedures. Rustow (1970: 28-29) adds that:

a country is likely to attain democracy not by coping the constitutional laws or parliamentary practices of some previous democracy, but rather by honestly facing up to its particular conflicts and by devising or adapting effective procedures for their accommodation.

The arguments above emphasize the interplay between politics and institutions. Certain elements are, therefore, responsible for the relative stable nature of civil-military relations in Ghana's fourth republic and their potential to institutionalize the constitutional arrangement which renders the military subservient to civilian authority. The elements identified in the current study are discussed below.

A Functioning Democracy Which Better Addresses the Needs of the Military Than Before

Democratization in the fourth republic of Ghana means the return of the military to the barracks. This did not, however, result from a violent rejection of the military; rather, it came about through reforms of the political system of Ghana and the institutions of state. Reform measures introduced since the onset of the fourth republic of Ghana seek to professionalize the military.

To start with, the military has had to accept that the principle that subordinates them to the elected political leaders applies. The military hierarchy acknowledges this fact and the officers interviewed confirmed this as "something they now take for granted" (Fieldwork, 2018). Closely related to this normative development is the relocation of the Ministry of Defence from the Burma Camp to the place popularly known among the military as "Square". The relocation was part of the reform measures outlined by the Limann administration but could not be implemented (Hutchful, 1997a, 1997b). The relocation is viewed as symbolically significant as it was and is still seen as representing the break in the domination of the military over the ministry (Hutchful, 1997a; Fieldwork, 2018).

Elections as a Conflict Resolution Mechanism in the Ghanaian Society

One major conflict in African states which has worked to bring the military into politics is the political conflict as characterized by Bofo-Arthur, (2008), the conflict about a mechanism to share political power which is acceptable to the elites in these states. Democratic elections have been described as constituting such mechanism when the democratic system receives the voluntary support of the elites and mass public (Diamond, 2005; Rustow, 1970). Article 66 clauses 1 and 2 of the fourth republican constitution of Ghana establishes a two-four-year term of office for the president, and this has been respected by the political parties and the citizens of Ghana since 1992 when the first presidential and parliamentary elections were first conducted. The electoral process has since gone through three political turnovers in the years 2000, 2008, and 2016.

These developments provide answers to the political conflict which bedeviled African states for the decades after independence. An implication of this development which relates to the current study is the commitment to the democratic system by Ghanaian elites and the mass public which includes the military. Ghanaians have demonstrated that they are strongly committed to democracy as a system of government in spite of the economic challenges which persist in the country (CDD-Ghana, 2005). The over five rounds of surveys conducted by Afro Barometer consistently indicate that almost 80% of Ghanaians prefer democratic governance to any other system of government they could think of. Although this study did not conduct a survey to gauge the commitment of the military to democracy, the interviews and the focus group discussions conducted lend support to the findings by Afro Barometer referred to above. As discussed above, the discussants in the focus group discussion unambiguously expressed a preference for democracy as a system of government. The army officers interviewed also support democracy, although they expect the democratic system to deliver political and economic goods.

The Rawlings Factor

Former president Jerry John Rawlings has played roles of destabilizing the political process of Ghana and then stabilizing it. Rawlings' role in the political stability of the fourth republic of Ghana is explained by among other factors his ability to reform the military to re-instill orderliness based on the traditional command structure notably its familiarity with, and experience as regards, issues that affect the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Police.

Unlike previous Presidents, Rawlings is a retired military officer with a record of having advocated military reforms.

The involvement of the military in politics in Ghana led by the junior officers and some non-commissioned officers disrupted command and control functions and further affected discipline (Handley & Mills, 2001). The third republic of Ghana especially suffered from this challenge and many officers vacated their post in fear for their lives (Hutchful, 1997a). It, therefore, came as little surprise when the government of President Limann was overthrown, and the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) was formed in its place. The character of the new regime as to being a military or not is disputed. It has been variously described as military regime (Agyeman-Duah, 1987), a civilian-cum-regime (Gyimah-Boadi, 1994) and non-military regime because it did not represent the corporate interest of the military (Handley & Mills, 2001). The difficulty in establishing the real character of the PNDC might come from the fact that the entire membership of the cabinet and majority of the PNDC members were civilians. However, the main constituency of the regime was the military. In fact, military officers and members of the other ranks were appointed to be second-in-command in all ministries, and as heads of state organisations and agencies, regional and district administrations (Agyeman-Duah, 1987).

The PNDC, thus, successfully warded off several coup attempts, and between 1982 and 1985 purged the military and established the 64th Battalion. This eventually served to establish control over the military (Agyeman-Duah, 1987; Handley & Mills, 2001; Hutchful, 1997a). Hutchful notes that Jerry John Rawlings transferred this model of control from the PNDC era to the civilian NDC period.

The Minister of Defence in the first government of the fourth republic, Alhaji Iddrisu Mahama, had enjoyed a lengthy tenure in the post, and had been in the Armed Forces Council prior to his appointment by the PNDC. The Deputy Minister of Defence, Lieutenant-Colonel K. T. Donkor, a former Chief of Staff, was also a retired military officer and regards himself as bridging the (civilian) Minister and the Generals (Agyeman-Duah, 1987). One cannot, therefore, doubt the success of President Rawlings in stabilizing the Armed Forces and getting them to accept the implications and advantages of constitutional rule. This development explains political stability in the Fourth Republic of Ghana.

However, this has to be set against Rawlings government's undemocratic approaches in achieving this feat. His approaches include the persistence of subjective controls, the maintenance of special security units, the suppression of public debate and lack of dialogue, the executive dominance and relative marginalization of Parliament, and attempts to militarism what have traditionally been civilian institutions of law and order (Hutchful, 1997a). Jerry John Rawlings, nevertheless, laid a foundation for democratic control of the military in the fourth republic of Ghana. It is to his credit for the restoration of the functions of command and control and discipline into the military.

Institutional Learning by the Military

A second positive factor is the acceptance within the military hierarchy of the principle of civil supremacy. Apart from the success of Rawlings in subordinating the Armed Forces to political authority, most officers have undoubtedly realised that the traumatic events of 1979 and 1981 subverted their legitimacy. "It was dangerous to be an officer in those days", an officer declared in respect of events of those periods (Fieldwork, 2018). Commanders and the elected government agree that they have a common interest in stabilizing their authority. While virtually all Commanders have expressed strong support for professionalization (Hutchful, 1997a), it is doubtful if there could be any possess of sufficient stature and confidence to resist, perhaps, the wishes of the President and to claim the unambiguous loyalty of their subordinates, the minimum requirements for them to play an effective role in defining the future of the military.

Conclusion

This study sought to provide some explanations to civil-military relations in the fourth republic of Ghana, which is going through democratic process.

The study initially sought to explain the nature of civil-military relations in the Fourth Republic of Ghana in the context of a stabilizing democratic polity. It did so by examining whether the politics of the period has successfully established norms of democratic control over the Ghanaian military given that the constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, *de jure*, politicizes the military institution. The data from both primary and secondary sources examined indicate that the military is going through the process of norm formation. They crucially support the current democratic process and wished that they also could be allowed to elect their own leaders the way the Ghanaian society does. Crucially, the military acknowledge the constitution of the fourth

republic of Ghana as the supreme document in Ghana which guides political, social and economic life. It is, in fact, a normative reference point for members of the military with regard to political change. They, furthermore, acknowledge the subservience of the military to the democratically elected leaders of the Ghanaian state. However, they expect the democratic system to deliver political, social and economic goods.

The study further sought to explain the causal elements responsible for the current state of civil-military relations in Ghana and its potential to become consolidated. One of the causal elements is a functioning democracy which better addresses the needs of the military than before. Democratization in the Fourth Republic of Ghana has introduced reform measures which seek to professionalize the military. The officers and men interviewed concede that they enjoy improved conditions of service under democratic leadership than under military authorities. The literature further point to the benefits which accrue to the military from their involvement in United Nation supervised peace keeping activities. They also receive additional training and equipment as democratic dividends (Handley & Mills, 2001).

Closely related to this element is the successful mediation of the electoral process in the major political conflict in a democracy, political competition for political power. The Fourth Republic has gone through three political turnovers, which indicates an increasingly consolidating democracy. Other causal elements include the Rawlings factor in the Ghanaian political system which essentially points to having played the role of returning the military to the barracks. The leadership of President Rawlings started the reform measures which have been continued by his successors. Moreover, there is the effect of historical antecedents of the military's involvements in Ghanaian politics and the fate of the protagonists. The case of the execution of the General following the June Fourth Uprising and the purge is a typical example.

Based on the findings, the study recommends that the concern expressed by the military about their status, and economic security reinforces the need for the democratic process in the fourth republic of Ghana to improve in democratic good governance. There is the need for the democratic regime to secure political and civil liberties and the generation of economic goods. These function to provide institutional guarantees for individual security, status and wealth. It, further, renders the democratic regime more legitimate (Diamond, 2005; Kohn, 1997). As argued above, "the tradition of legitimacy in government acts on the one hand to deter military interference in politics, and on the other to counteract intervention should it threaten or occur" (Kohn, 1997: 5).

References

- Agyeman-Duah, B. (1987). Ghana, 1982-6: The politics of the P.N.D. C. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 25(4), 613-642.
- Agyeman-Duah, B. (2002). Civil-military relations in Ghana's fourth republic. *Critical Perspectives*, 9.
- Bahadur, M. (2016). Democracy and political control. *TOI, India*, 3, 11-17.
- Boafo-Arthur, K. (2008). *Democracy and stability in West Africa: The Ghanaian experience*. Department of Peace and Conflict Research (DPCR), Uppsala University & the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI), Uppsala Claude Ake Memorial Papers No. 4.
- Boahen, A. A. (1975). *Ghana: Evolution and change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. London: Longman Group.
- Brewster, R. W. (1963). *Government in modern society (2nd ed.)*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches (3rd edition)*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Diamond, L. (2005). *Democracy, development and good governance: The inseparable links*. Kronti ne Akwamu Series No. 1. Accra: CDD Ghana.
- Easton, D. (1953). *The political system*. New York: Knopf.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. (1994). Ghana's uncertain political opening. *Journal of Democracy*, 5(2), 75-86.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2010). *Towards a constitution for a democratic and well-governed Ghana*. Accra: CDD, Accra-Ghana.

- Handley A. & Mills G, (2001). *From military coups to multiparty elections: The Ghanaian military-civil transition*. Working Paper 2. Conflict Research Unit. Netherlands Institute of International Relations.
- Huntington, S. P. (1957). *The soldier and the state: The theory and politics of civil military relations*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Hutchful, E. (1997a). Reconstructing civil-military relations and the collapse of democracy in Ghana, 1979-81. *African Affairs*, 96(385), 535-560.
- Hutchful, E. (1997b). Military policy and reform in Ghana. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 5(2), 251-278.
- Jackson, R. J. & Jackson, D. (1997). *A comparative introduction to political science*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kohn, R. H. (1997). How democracies control the military. *Journal of Democracy*, 8(4), 140-153.
- Kohn, R. H. (1997). How democracies control the military. *Journal of Democracy*, 8(4), 140-153.
- Leftwich, A. (2008). *Developmental states, effective states and poverty reduction: The primacy of politics*. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD).
- March, A. & Olsen, B. (1984). The new institutionalism: Organizational factors in political life. *The American Political Science Review*, 78(3), 734-749.
- Mckwatin, D. (1991). *The politics of political instability: State, society and public*. Oklahoma City OK: Custom Academic Publishing Company.
- Oquaye, M. (2004). *Politics in Ghana 1982-1992: Rawlings, revolution and populist democracy*. Accra: Tornado Publishers. *Politics*, 2(3), 337-363.
- Prempeh, H. K. (2008). The challenge of constitutionalism. In B. Agyemen-Duah (ed.), *Ghana: Governance in the fourth republic* (pp. 97-125). Accra: Ghana Center for Democratic Development.
- Rustow, D. A. (1970). Transitions to democracy: Toward a dynamic model. *Comparative*
- Sandbrook, R. & Oelbaum, J. (1999). *Reforming the political kingdom: Governance and development in Ghana's fourth republic*. Critical Perspectives No.2, (CDDGhana, Accra).
- Turner, M., Hulme, D. & McCourt, W. (2015). *Governance, management & development: Making the state work*. New York: Macmillan.