

Chapter 6

Election Security and Democratic Civil-Military Relations in Ghana¹

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Conventional wisdom suggests that militaries in new democracies ought to stay distant from electoral processes and from internal missions more generally. Among other things, such involvement could compromise the institutionalization of military neutrality and civilian control. Nonetheless, due to the limited capacities of their internal security forces, many new or aspiring democracies have little choice other than to draw on the military to provide election security. This chapter investigates how Ghana—one of Africa’s most democratic states—has confronted this dilemma.

The chapter starts with the premise that elections comprise critical junctures in which the actions of military actors may upset (or perpetuate) existing patterns in civil-military relations. During electoral periods, militaries in Africa often play several roles, such as supporting election planning and logistics, providing security to voting process, and responding to instances of election-related violence. Given the tensions and uncertainties surrounding elections, military involvement could threaten the neutrality of the security establishment² and the institutionalization of effective mechanisms of civilian oversight.³ As such, scholars ought to study elections in the same way that scholars have traditionally studied military coups: as events that shape subsequent patterns of civil-military relations and, more broadly, the potential trajectories of democratization.

Whereas militaries are often seen as potential threats to new democratic regimes,⁴ this chapter illuminates how they may come to support peaceful, fair, and efficient electoral processes. In Ghana, the military's role in a broader election security apparatus has produced a virtuous cycle in which improvements to election quality strengthen and reinforce democratic civil-military relations. The analysis identifies two key factors contributing to this virtuous cycle: 1) the military's meaningful coordination with other security-sector and civilian actors and 2) learning processes that result from the military's engagement in a regular, repetitive task. The former helps to build trust and reinforce mechanisms of civilian oversight, and the latter enables the military to refine and improve its performance in a highly visible and important role. The analysis in this chapter underscores how, in countries where clear external threats are minimal, the military's engagement in nationally visible democracy-serving roles may constitute one avenue through which to overcome common challenges in civil-military relations in new democracies.⁵

Elections, Security, and Military Roles in Sub-Saharan Africa

Whereas, prior to the 1990s, African leaders typically seized power through coups or other extraconstitutional means, elections are now the most common mechanism of leadership selection in sub-Saharan Africa. Of 197 presidential elections held between 1991 and 2017, 65 have resulted in a transfer of power⁶—a considerable increase compared to earlier decades.⁷ Despite some significant exceptions, elections have become more peaceful, free, and fair with more than half of all elections held in sub-Saharan Africa during this period classified by

scholars as “almost peaceful” or “peaceful” and as either “somewhat free and fair” or “free and fair.”⁸ Nonetheless, security issues are still paramount in many African elections. For instance, approximately 40 percent of African elections involve some form of violent mobilization such as vigilantism perpetrated by party activists or state repression of election-related protests.⁹

State security forces may act as either perpetrators or pacifiers of electoral violence.¹⁰ Following the 2007 election in Kenya, for example, state security forces engaged in violence with aggrieved opposition supporters, the result of which was more than 1,000 deaths and 350,000 displaced.¹¹ Even the threat of state-sanctioned violence is potentially detrimental to elections. In Zimbabwe, for example, voters are more likely to vote for the incumbent because they know that the president may deploy the military to reclaim power coercively in the event of an election loss.¹²

As potential pacifiers of election violence, conversely, the effectiveness of security forces in monitoring hotspots and preventing violence is often limited. For example, while the pre-emptive deployment of security forces in Kenya for the 2013 election has been cited as one of the primary factors that prevented conflict, it also came with limits on free expression.¹³ In other words, the role of security forces in preventing violence comes at the risk of making elections less democratic. This fine line of election security constitutes a major challenge to meaningful democratization in states prone to violence. It also implies that the participation of the military or other security forces poses a serious risk to the perceived or actual freeness of the election.

Election security issues also arise when states are unable to implement the associated logistics, such as in transporting ballots to remote locations. For this reason, both police and military forces

are often responsible for assisting with election logistics and securing polling places and ballots.¹⁴ Electoral management bodies may delegate certain tasks, such as security of ballot transportation, to military personnel who have the wherewithal to do so securely.¹⁵ However, as Hounkpe and Gueye note, security forces in Africa often face “difficulties related to the provision of equipment, means of transport, food for the troops and logistics.”¹⁶ These resource challenges may undermine the extent to which African security forces can effectively implement these election security tasks, as well as their motivations to do so. If security forces cannot adequately manage logistics to ensure a secure election, they may actually undermine confidence in the election, sowing distrust among competing parties and compromising their role as potential arbiters of election-related conflicts.

Although in many cases militaries are constitutionally limited in the extent to which they take part in electoral or other internal missions, the armed forces are often seen as an important backstop in case of disturbances that are beyond the capacity of the internal security forces.¹⁷ For this reason, militaries in particular often play a more passive yet important role in providing election security.

Civil-Military Relations in Ghana

Ghana’s military is exceptional in this regard. Its military has become a positive player in various activities related to election security. Its contribution to peaceful, free, and fair elections challenges the idea that militaries ought to remain distant from election security missions. Indeed, by coordinating with electoral actors and learning from repeated elections, the Ghanaian

military's participation in providing election security has represented a positive force for the institutionalization of civilian control of the armed forces and the advancement of democracy. In this section, I provide a brief overview of Ghana's transition from praetorian to civilian rule and discuss some persistent challenges to the advancement of democratic civil-military relations in Ghana.

At first glance, there is little reason to have predicted that the military in Ghana would play such a positive role. First, Ghana's history of military rule from 1966 through 1992 mirrors the history of many other African countries. Second, the fear of violence and other major security issues have not subsided over the course of Ghana's seven consecutive democratic elections since 1992, thereby creating uncertainty surrounding the role that armed forces might play in advancing or undermining peaceful, free, and fair elections. Third, despite Ghana's largely successful process of democratization over the past several decades, issues surrounding civilian control and politicization of the military persist. In particular, legislative oversight of the executive branch—including the coercive apparatus—remains weak.¹⁸ Finally, the continued involvement of the GAF in domestic missions has given rise to periodic clashes between the police and military, as politicized management structures and weak legislative oversight pose challenges to civilian control.

From the time of Ghana's independence from Great Britain in 1957 through the first democratic transfer of power in 2001, Ghana's military maintained a central place in both political contests and the national government. Military involvement in politics in Ghana dates back to at least the 1960s, when top military officers grew weary of President Kwame Nkrumah's tightening grip on

the military.¹⁹ Between 1957 and 1981, military officers were involved in a number of attempted coups and coups leading to overthrows of Ghana's three republican governments, deeming their government a "modern day variant of a praetorian polity" with security personnel serving as the "praetorian guards."²⁰ The subsequent decades saw frequent clashes between security agencies and repetitive widespread abuse of civil and political rights.²¹ As Naunihal Singh explains, at various times military mobilizations sprang from all different levels of the military and involved a range of grievances and political dispositions.²² In other words, the spotty history of civilian control in Ghana cannot be attributed to any singular political rivalry or group but rather to a range of factors that have facilitated or restricted coordinated mobilization on the part of the military.²³

The last successful coup of the post-independence era was led by then-Flight Lieutenant J.J. Rawlings on December 31, 1981. Rawlings subsequently led Ghana as a military dictator in a period marked by political stabilization, but also brutality against regime opponents. During this period, as Eboe Hutchful has explained, Rawlings undertook a series of military reforms that could be seen, in large part, as the military's internal response to "waves of discontent against widespread abuses by a politicised military hierarchy."²⁴ The reforms included efforts aimed at asserting greater civilian control over the military, such as strengthening the positions of civilians in the Ministry of Defence, granting parliament the ability to determine the military budget, and creating joint councils that empowered civilians, working in concert with military leaders, to set security policies.²⁵

Faced with severe economic decline, the loss of aid from the Soviet Union, and growing popular demands for democracy spreading rapidly across the West African subregion, Rawlings retired

from the military (for a second time) in 1991 and, the following year, oversaw a transition to a democratic constitution. In December 1992, Rawlings successfully stood for election as Ghana's first elected president of the Fourth Republic.²⁶

The military and political reforms implemented by Rawlings in the 1980s and 1990s were highly successful in solidifying the military's retreat from politics. A number of factors have contributed to this success. One common explanation suggests the importance of "the Rawlings factor"—the idea that a strong and legitimate military leader highly committed to democratic rule can play an outsized role in the creation of democratic civil-military institutions.²⁷ Observers also credit President John Kufuor's handling of the first democratic transition of power in 2001.²⁸ On the one hand, Kufuor asserted his own control over the military, for instance by appointing his brother Kwame Addo-Kufuor as his first Minister of Defence, by disbanding and re-assigning members of the 64th Infantry Regiment that had protected Rawlings, and by abolishing holidays that celebrated the 1981 coup by Rawlings. On the other hand, Kufuor also took steps to ensure that he would not alienate military personnel who might have remained loyal to Rawlings. For example, Kufuor limited the scope and power of the National Reconciliation Commission he convened to investigate past governments' violent abuses of power.²⁹ Another oft-cited explanation credits the GAF's embrace of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping roles, which often offer deployed troops opportunities for higher salaries and benefits. With more than 3,200 UN peacekeepers, Ghana is the fourth largest African contributor and the eighth largest contributor globally to UN peacekeeping operations.³⁰ It also hosts the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, which provides training and educational opportunities and serves as a leading think tank on civil-military relations.

Thanks to these leadership and reform factors, the GAF has remained largely out of electoral politics since the 1992 transition, and elections have proceeded without interruption every four years, resulting in three peaceful interparty transfers of power. At times, however, the Ghanaian military has also engaged in ways that are reminiscent of the praetorian period. In November 2004, for example, authorities arrested dozens of retired and serving military personnel on suspicion of their engagement in activities meant to disrupt the scheduled December 2004 presidential and parliamentary general elections.³¹ Moreover, some have noted that the military still assumes police duties, albeit rarely.³² For example, the military has been involved in such complex and dangerous internal threats as the illegal mining, known as *galamsey*, in western Ghana. At times, the military's involvement in law enforcement has caused tension between the police and military and led to at least one clash in 2015 between the two forces in the town of Prampram over the military's involvement in providing security at a primary election for the then-ruling party, the National Democratic Congress.³³ In general, there is greater popular trust in the GAF than in the police, who are widely seen as corrupt, ineffective, and politically motivated in their duties.³⁴ These dynamics underscore how the GAF's continued involvement in internal missions—including election security—could threaten recent progress in returning the military to the barracks.

Another challenge Ghana faces concerns the political and administrative structures governing and managing the military.³⁵ The post-transition reforms, as Eboe Hutchful explains, did introduce “some modicum of public accountability for military policy,” including ending the “incestuous relationship” between the military command and the political leadership as well as the introduction of parliamentary scrutiny.³⁶ Although politicization of recruitment or dismissals from the military are rare in Ghana, the civilians charged with overseeing the military reside in ministerial positions

that have become highly politicized. Since Rawlings left office in 2001, few of Ghana's ministers of defense (MOD) have possessed a military background, and recent MODs and their deputies have been deeply embedded in the ruling party.³⁷ As is widely acknowledged, the Ghanaian president's appointment powers are immense and have informally expanded over time. Presidents appoint not only ministers and deputy ministers but also members of the National Security Council, the director of intelligence, and a large number of coordinating councils and commissions that develop security policies. The president is also vested with the ability to appoint all mayors and district executives across the country, many of whom oversee responses to local security issues. Moreover, legislative or other forms of public oversight remain weak. The parliament of Ghana rarely exerts power in ways that challenge the executive branch, and the budgets approved by parliament do not guarantee that government ministries, departments, and agencies receive the budgeted amounts. This combination of politicians occupying key security sector leadership roles along with few effective mechanisms of independent oversight, risks the re-politicization of the military by civilian politicians. In short, although most would agree that civilian control of the Ghanaian military has become well-institutionalized since the 1992 regime transition, there remain issues, which if exacerbated, could incentivize politicization of the military in ways that undermine neutrality and civilian control.

The Military and Election Security in Ghana

It is with this backdrop in mind that I explore the roles and performance of Ghana's military in the provision of election security. Whereas Ghana's elections are by-and-large conducted in a peaceful manner, there are a number of perpetual security problems that arise in each electoral

cycle. The risk of violence is one such threat. Violence and violent threats surrounding elections can take several forms.³⁸ Party “foot soldiers” or “macho men”—activists who organize themselves to mobilize local votes or provide security for the party—sometimes resort to illegal and violent tactics, including stealing ballot boxes, harassing members of other parties, and raiding party offices.³⁹ Such incidents often occur in response to particular political tensions in the constituency, for example when party foot soldiers feel they are not treated well by local political leaders or state authorities.⁴⁰

Another form of electoral violence in Ghana occurs when national electoral politics coincide with local disputes over chieftaincy. In Yendi, for example, a rivalry between the Andani and Abudu royal families escalated in 2002 following the killing of the Ya-Na Yakubu Andani and 40 of his elders. Rumors of political motivations behind the killings, specifically rumors implicating the New Patriotic Party (NPP), which was in power at the time, spread quickly and have cast a shadow over electoral politics in the constituency.⁴¹ The perception that key security positions in the new NPP government were occupied by members of the Abudu family further complicated the incident.⁴² For this reason, there is particular skepticism about the police response to the killings, suggesting that the government at the time allowed the massacre to occur. As Clementina Amankwaah explains, this rivalry has often resurfaced during election periods and threats of violence remain common.⁴³

Although mostly minor, such episodes of election-related violence have occurred regularly in Ghana’s elections since 1992. However, there are indications that violent incidents in Ghana have become less frequent over time, and the quality of elections has improved despite

allegations of fraud.⁴⁴ Studies of election-related violence in Ghana, for example by Amankwaah,⁴⁵ as well as data from the Countries at Risk of Electoral Violence dataset,⁴⁶ suggest that violent incidents were most prevalent in the 2000, 2004, and 2008 elections and that relatively fewer violent incidents arose in the 2012 and 2016 elections. Whereas a full explanation of these declining trends in election violence is beyond the scope of this chapter, I describe in the paragraphs that follow how the involvement of the GAF in providing election security has contributed to this positive trend.⁴⁷ In particular, I discuss the operations of the National Elections Security Task Force (NESTF) and its processes of coordination and learning that promote GAF engagement in a way that advanced democratic civil-military relations.

The National Elections Security Task Force

The primary vehicle through which the GAF participate in the provision of election security is the NESTF. First formed in 1996, the NESTF coordinates the preparation of security agencies to maintain peace before during and after elections, and it oversees similar task forces at both region and district levels.⁴⁸ The NESTF provides logistical support in the printing and transporting ballots, as well as convening and managing a broader array of security-related activities. Led by the police, the NESTF now works closely with all security agencies, the Electoral Commission, political parties, and traditional and religious leaders.⁴⁹ In addition to its participation in the NESTF, the GAF maintain approximately 20 operational units ready to respond to internal security issues, including intercommunal violence, public health threats, and illegal poaching and mining.⁵⁰

The armed forces are an important part of the NESTF and the broader elections security architecture in Ghana. For instance, 6,000 troops deployed in the 2016 elections. The special units described previously, including joint police-military patrols in urban areas, also monitor and respond to election-related issues. The Electoral Commission also relies on Ghana's Navy and Air Force to transport voting materials safely to remote polling locations.⁵¹ In general, the military's role is to provide backup in difficult or complex situations or when the police are unable to adequately resolve a situation. One such instance occurred just after the 2016 election in the Accra neighborhood of Agbogbloshie where, according to news accounts, "some aggrieved youth" supporters of the victorious NPP attempted to take over several facilities.⁵² The situation "left [the police] with no option but to call for reinforcement from the GAF, who were part of a rapid response unit set up to deal with these kinds of electoral issues."⁵³ The incident conveys the importance of the military in responding to serious episodes of violence, which are particularly likely to occur in tense periods of party mobilization surrounding elections.

Many observers have lauded the performance of NESTF players in their efforts to ensure free and fair elections as well as in preventing and responding to violent incidents. A report on the 2008 elections noted that in their participation in the NESTF, "[t]he security agencies in general went about their duties with a high sense of professionalism, which reduced violence to the barest minimum."⁵⁴ Regarding a tense situation surrounding the close results and subsequent challenge by the losing party in 2012, Aubyn and Abdallah conclude, "The NESTF played an exemplary role in averting possible conflict after the declaration of the results."⁵⁵ Another study notes, "the strategies mounted by the security apparatus achieved the overall intended goal of a peaceful election."⁵⁶ Likewise, in the 2016 elections, observers noted that the NESTF ensured

adequate preparation to monitor and respond to violence⁵⁷ and that “the early activation of the NESTF infrastructure...helped to mitigate the incidence of violence on Election Day.”⁵⁸

In the following subsections, I describe two interrelated factors—coordination and learning—that have been particularly important for the success of the NESTF as it relates to the participation of the GAF in election security activities.

Coordination

Over the course of the six national elections during which the NESTF has operated, it has grown to include an expanding set of actors that coordinate and consult with security agencies. These mechanisms of coordination have lent themselves to a productive civilian-military engagement geared toward the advancement of democracy. They NESTF have also created an informal oversight network within its structure that helps to ensure that the military adheres to its prescribed election security roles. Together these aspects of coordination serve to enhance the positive dividends of the military’s participation in the NESTF.

Coordination of elections through Ghana’s NESTF has contributed to what many see as effective provision of election security by Ghana’s security agencies. In a report following the 2008 elections, for example, the Carter Center noted in particular that coordination among the security agencies and the Electoral Commission ensured that adequate numbers of personnel would be available across the country on election day.⁵⁹ The center’s report also found that despite their presence, there were no reported “incidents of intimidation or harassment, nor any impediment to

the free movement of voters...parties, security personnel and voters worked together to ensure that the election was orderly.”⁶⁰ Likewise, an assessment of the security agencies’ participation in NESTF following the 2012 election noted that despite some instances of harassment, tension, and confusion, “Potential outbreaks of conflict were averted by the efficient and collaborative role of the security forces.”⁶¹

By using its resources and knowledge in service to election security, the military is able to enhance its credibility among the actors involved in the NESTF, including many local leaders such as chiefs, political party officers, religious leaders, and journalists. As one Ministry of Defence employee noted, many of the GAF’s accomplishments happen during UN or Economic Community of West African States missions and remain unknown to most Ghanaians.⁶² Through work on the NESTF, the GAF’s professionalism, skills, and resources have become known to many local communities and to the observing population more broadly. The military’s coordinating roles in the NESTF also make visible its serious commitment to the democratic process.

The GAF’s participation in coordinated NESTF activities also builds trust and cohesion across the security forces, which can bolster coordination in other arenas. Evidence of this cohesion emerged in the aftermath of the high-profile murder of Army Captain Maxwell Mahama in the Obuasi mining region in early 2017. Mahama had been deployed to the region as part of a response unit tasked with addressing illegal mining issues. In a piece memorializing Captain Mahama, Assistant Superintendent of Police Effia Tenge wrote, “Coming to terms with the [incident] has been very difficult for some of us, since we served on the Regional Election

Security Task Force committee, in the 2016 general elections.”⁶³ She goes on to state the critical importance of a coordinated response to issues of mob injustice, and the threat these issue pose to Ghana’s democratic society.⁶⁴ Although tensions between the military and police still exist in some localities, the NESTF provides an important structured opportunity to work through such issues and advances opportunities for coordination on a range of security problems.

The fact that many politically independent and nonstate actors coordinate as part of the NESTF’s security programs also provides some degree of civilian oversight. Most importantly, perhaps, is the supremacy of Ghana’s independent Electoral Commission in overseeing all aspects of election administration and security. The Electoral Commission has been successful in resisting real or perceived political interference in election administration, including in the realm of security planning and procedures. As Gyimah-Boadi explains, the Electoral Commission has refused to let the politically-led Bureau for National Investigations take a larger role in NESTF activities because its mandate called for such meetings to be held strictly by the police service.⁶⁵ As one 2013 report notes, measures to insulate the task force from political influence by creating a command structure that is independent of local, regional, and national government has proved particularly important for striking a delicate balance in which the presence of security forces in known “hot spots” serves neither to intimidate voters nor stoke violence among political factions.⁶⁶

A growing number of civil-society actors are involved in the NESTF through consultations and public education campaigns, local and regional peace councils, election observation, and monitoring activities. These actors can also provide civilian oversight of security agent conduct

and of potential partisan action on the part of security forces participating in NESTF activities. In various press releases and reports released by the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers, for example, the organization's leaders regularly raise issues of partisan activities among security personnel. They call on the security services to show professionalism in their conduct and maintain political neutrality in the discharge of their duties. In effect, the coordinating structures affiliated with the NESTF, along with its local and regional branches, have helped to generate a network of organizations that are well positioned to publicize concerns about partisan or non-professional action on the part of the security personnel. Although the effects of such publicity on the security agencies are unknown, the fact that the NESTF provides civil society an opportunity to observe and bring to light the actions of security personnel is one important element of civilian control.

Learning

The NESTF has operated over the course of six consecutive national elections, from 1996 through the most recent election in 2016, and it was reactivated again in 2019. The task force also assists with party primary elections, by-elections, and local government elections. Although the composition, structure, and activities of the NESTF has evolved over this period, the repetition with each election has facilitated processes of experimentation, learning, preparation, and adaptation. In turn, these processes contribute to what many see as an increasing capacity and effectiveness of Ghana's security agencies in the provision of election security.⁶⁷

One important way in which learning has improved the preparedness of security forces is in the identification of hot spots with histories of violence, vigilante activity, or chieftaincy disputes. Reporting on election security operations in the 2008 election, Issacharoff describes how the security agencies in the NESTF work with the Electoral Commission to examine patterns of violence in previous elections and other recent violent episodes in Ghanaian communities.⁶⁸ They then devise national, regional, and district level plans, test for preparedness a month before the election, and liaise with other groups to watch for early warning signs. The process is repeated each electoral cycle, and the number of hot spots to which security forces are deployed has increased with each election. There were “several hundred” flash points in the 2008 election,⁶⁹ approximately 1,000 in the 2012 election,⁷⁰ and over 5,000 in 2016.⁷¹ This is not necessarily a sign of increasing violence, but it rather reflects accumulation of knowledge and monitoring capacity.

The evolution of the NESTF has also led to structural and procedural changes aimed at ensuring independent civilian oversight over security forces participating in the NESTF. As Aubyn and Abdallah explain, widespread concerns about the potential for partisan actions by police personnel have catalyzed recommendations on several occasions to further empower the Electoral Commission to make key decisions about the roles and activities of the NESTF security forces.⁷² Although this change has been slow to take root, the discussion represents an important indication that the task force is helping Ghana’s security apparatus to grapple with such issues as professionalism, impartiality, and civilian control.

Another important example of procedural change has come in the Electoral Commission's 2008 decision to tabulate votes at polling stations, rather than transporting ballots to a central tabulation center as they had done in the past. According to Issacharoff, the then-chair of Electoral Commission, Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, believed that "transparency would help build party confidence in results and damp[en] violence."⁷³ As a result, the commission decided that on Election Day, instead of transporting all ballots to a central point for counting, tabulation would take place at each of the country's 22,000 polling centers. The Electoral Commission's decision to change the tabulation procedure reflects a process of learning that builds on the effective deployment of security forces to Ghana's polling stations to enhance popular legitimacy of elections.

Although challenges in the provision of Ghana's election security remain,⁷⁴ this discussion illustrates how Ghana's election security task force has become more effective and efficient in ensuring security surrounding elections. Additionally, though outside of conventional military roles, the GAF's participation in election security has contributed to these successes.

Furthermore, practices of coordination and processes of learning have proved particularly important in reinforcing norms and structures of military neutrality, effectiveness, and democratic civilian control.

Conclusion

Over the past two decades, the GAF has played an active role in the provision of election security. Its involvement has contributed to improvements in the quality of elections and the

decline of violent incidents by providing materials and protection to make election administration more efficient, secure, and transparent.

The military's involvement in election security has also paid dividends for Ghana's democratic civil-military relations. It has empowered a broader set of civilian actors to see and monitor the actions of military personnel. The military's involvement in election security has also catalyzed discussions about how to bolster oversight by civilian institutions. This mechanism of civilian oversight is particularly important given that Ghana's legislature has yet to take up consistent and meaningful oversight of executive functions. In some cases, the GAF's involvement has helped to improve coordination and trust between the military and the internal security apparatus on complex security issues. Moreover, it has improved the ability of security forces writ large to anticipate and respond to violent incidents. Although progress in these areas has not always been linear, the repetition of elections in Ghana since 1992 have provided important opportunities for civilian and military actors come together to revisit the role of the military in elections and the parameters surrounding their involvement.

The military's involvement in election security certainly comes with risks. Future research ought to consider under what circumstances militaries may help or hinder election security and advance (or not) processes of democratization. Ghana's case suggests that the military may have an especially important role to play where citizens fear partisan responses on the part of the internal security forces. The relative professionalism of the GAF and distance from politics may help to legitimize and professionalize the NESTF. Moreover, as this case study makes clear, gradual

change and adaptation over the course of multiple election cycles is important for fine tuning the military's role and the productivity of its participation.

Notes

¹ Special thanks to George Bob-Milliar of Kwame Nkrumah University for Science and Technology, Ernest Larrey of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, and Emmanuel Sowatey of the University of Ghana for providing valuable insights into election security issues in Ghana.

² For example, see David Pion-Berlin, "Military Autonomy and Emerging Democracies in South America," *Comparative Politics* 25, no. 1 (1992): 83–102, <https://doi.org/10.2307/422098>; Richard H. Kohn, "How Democracies Control the Military," *Journal of Democracy* 8, no. 4 (1997): 140–153, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1997.0060>.

³ For example, see Thomas C. Bruneau, "Introduction," in *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Scott Tollefson, 1–16 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006); Aurel Croissant and David Kuehn, "Introduction," in *Reforming Civil-Military Relations in New Democracies*, ed. Aurel Croissant and David Kuehn, 1–21 (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2017).

⁴ For example, see Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

⁵ For example, see Bruneau, “Introduction;” Croissant and Kuehn, “Introduction;” Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei “Introduction” in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁶ Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jan Teorell et al., “V-Dem [Country-Year/Country-Date] Dataset v8,” Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.23696/vdemcy18>.

⁷ Between 1960 and 1990, there were 106 presidential elections resulting in 14 transfers of power. Coppedge et al., “V-Dem.”

⁸ Staffan I. Lindberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

⁹ Scott Straus and Charlie Taylor, “Democratization and Electoral Violence in sub-Saharan Africa, 1990–2007” (paper presented at Association of Professional Security Agencies, Toronto, 2009), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1451561.

¹⁰ In this section, I discuss the potential roles of security forces including militaries, police, gendarmes, or others. Whether the military or internal forces (or both) take on these roles varies widely across countries.

¹¹ Stefan Dercon and Roxana Gutiérrez-Romero, “Triggers and Characteristics of the 2007 Kenyan Electoral Violence,” *World Development* 40, no. 4 (2012): 731–744, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2011.09.015>.

¹² Matthew Ellman and Leonard Wantchekon, “Electoral Competition under the Threat of Political Unrest,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115, no. 2 (2000): 499–531, <https://doi.org/10.1162/003355300554836>.

¹³ Claire Elder, Susan Stigant, and Jonas Claes, *Elections and Violent Conflict in Kenya: Making Prevention Stick* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2014),

<https://www.usip.org/publications/2014/11/elections-and-violent-conflict-kenya-making-prevention-stick>.

¹⁴ “Securing Ballot Boxes during Transportation,” Ace Project, accessed September 7, 2019, <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/vc/vcf/vcf02/vcf02a>.

¹⁵ This was noted as well in the case of Peru by Paul Shemella, “The Spectrum of Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces,” in *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations*, Thomas Bruneau and Scott Tollefson, 122–142 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).

¹⁶ Mathias Hounkpe and Alioune Badara Gueye, *The Role of Security Forces in the Electoral Process: The Case of Six West African Countries*, Vol. 8 (Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, 2006).

¹⁷ Hounkpe and Gueye, *The Role of Security Forces*, 47.

¹⁸ Staffan I. Lindberg, “What Accountability Pressures Do MPs in Africa Face and How Do They Respond? Evidence from Ghana,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 48, no. 1 (2010): 117–142, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X09990243>.

¹⁹ Zoltan Barany, “How Post-colonial Armies Came About: Comparative Perspectives from Asia and Africa,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 49, no. 5 (2014): 597–616, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909613507229>.

²⁰ Kumi Ansah-Koi, “The Security Agencies and National Security in a Decade of Liberalism,” in *Ghana: One Decade of the Liberal State*, ed. Kwame Boafo-Arthur, 188–189 (Dakar: Codesria, 2002).

²¹ Ansah-Koi, “The Security Agencies,” 189.

²² Naunihal Singh, *Seizing Power: The Strategic Logic of Military Coups* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

²³ Singh, *Seizing Power*.

²⁴ Eboe Hutchful, “Military Policy and Reform in Ghana,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, no. 2 (1997): 251–278, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X97002450>.

²⁵ Hutchful, “Military Policy.”

²⁶ Note that there are questions as to whether this election was conducted in a free and fair manner. Rawlings won by a large margin.

²⁷ Kevin Shillington, *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992).

²⁸ Jeffrey Haynes, “Democratic Consolidation in Africa: The Problematic Case of Ghana,” *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 41, no. 1 (2003): 48–76, <https://doi.org/10.1080/713999609>.

²⁹ Specifically, while Kufuor responded to pressure to form the National Reconciliation Commission to investigate the abuses of previous governments, the commission effectively lacked power to engage and prosecute perpetrators—a condition that constituted a “serious blow to the efforts of the NRC.” Nahla Valji, *Ghana’s National Reconciliation Commission: A Comparative Assessment*, Occasional Paper Series (New York: International Center for Transitional Justice, 2006), 13, https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Ghana-Reconciliation-Commission-2006-English_0.pdf.

³⁰ Festus Aubyn and Kwesi Aning, “Ghana: Country Profile,” Providing for Peacekeeping last updated November 2015, <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-ghana/>.

³¹ Ansah-Koi, “The Security Agencies,” 189.

³² Ansah-Koi, “The Security Agencies,” 198.

³³ Thanks to Emmanuel Sowatey for calling this incident to my attention. For an account, see for example, Ebenezer Afanyi Dadzie, “#NDCDecides: Police Clash with Soldiers at Ningo-Prampram Primary,” *Citi*, November 22, 2015, <http://citifmonline.com/2015/11/22/ndcdecides-police-clash-with-soldiers-at-ningo-prampram-primary/>.

³⁴ Differential levels of trust are evident in Afrobarometer surveys and in a 2008 study by Tankebe. In the most recent Afrobarometer survey conducted in 2014–2015 (Round 6), only 35 percent of Ghanaians said they trust the police either “a lot” or “somewhat.” “Ghana,” Afrobarometer, accessed May 5, 2020, <https://www.afrobarometer.org/countries/ghana-1>; Justice Tankebe, “Police Effectiveness and Police Trustworthiness in Ghana: An Empirical Appraisal,” *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 8, no. 2 (2008): 185–202, <https://doi.org/10.1177/17488958080888994>.

³⁵ For more on this issue as it relates to election security in particular, see Ernest Ansah Lartey, and Kwesi Aning, “The Role of the Security Sector in Ghana’s Democracy: A Case Study of the December 2012 Elections,” Kujenga Amani Series, July 11, 2013, <https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2013/07/11/the-role-of-the-security-sector-in-ghanas-democracy-a-case-study-of-the-december-2012-elections/>.

³⁶ Hutchful, “Military Policy,” 264.

³⁷ Rachel Sigman, “Which Jobs for Which Boys: Party Financing, Party Financing, Patronage and State Capacity in African Democracies” (PhD Dissertation, Syracuse University, 2015).

³⁸ For a more detailed explanation of the national and local elements of electoral violence in Ghana, see Felix Kumah-Abiwu, “Issue Framing and Electoral Violence in Ghana: A Conceptual

Analysis,” *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 55, no. 2 (2017): 165–186,

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14662043.2017.1277926>.

³⁹ For a general overview of party foot soldiers in Ghana, see George M. Bob-Milliar, “Political Party Activism in Ghana: Factors Influencing the Decision of the Politically Active to Join a Political Party,” *Democratization* 19, no (2012): 668–689,

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2011.605998>.

⁴⁰ For example, Kwame Asamoah describes violent vigilante activity that occurred in the Ayawaso-West Wuogon constituency in response to perceptions that the local police were politically biased. Kwame Asamoah, “Addressing the Problem of Political Vigilantism in Ghana through the Conceptual Lens of Wicked Problems,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 55, no. 3 (2019): 457–471, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909619887608>.

⁴¹ See, for example, Afua Hirsch, “Ghana’s Rival Dagbon Royals Risk Pulling the Country Apart,” *Guardian*, July 5, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jul/05/ghana-royal-rivalry-threatens-violence>.

⁴² John Mark Pokoo, “Inter- and Intra-Party Conflicts and Democratic Consolidation in Ghana,” in *Managing Election-Related Violence for Democratic Stability in Ghana*, ed. Kwesi Aning and Kwaku Danso, 140–176 (Accra, Ghana: Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, 2011).

⁴³ Clementina Amankwaah, *Election-Related Violence: The Case of Ghana* (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2013), 31.

⁴⁴ This trend is borne out in, for example, V-Dem’s 2018 Free and Fair Elections Index. See Coppedge et al., “V-Dem.”

⁴⁵ Amankwaah, *Election-Related Violence*.

⁴⁶ Sarah Birch, and David Muchlinski. “The Dataset of Countries at Risk of Electoral Violence,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 32, no. 2 (2017): 217–236, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2017.1364636>.

⁴⁷ For insight into these broader trends, see Abdul-Gafaru Abdulai and Gordon Crawford, "Consolidating democracy in Ghana: Progress and Prospects?," *Democratization* 17 no (2010): 26-67.

⁴⁸ Benjamin Kwasi Agordzo and Joana Ama Osei-Tutu, “Marching to the Polls: Securitizing Electoral Processes in Ghana,” in *Managing Election-Related Conflict and Violence for Democratic Stability in Ghana II*, ed. Kwesi Aning, Kwaku Danso, and Naila Salihu, 10–22 (Accra, Ghana: Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, 2016).

⁴⁹ Lucas Issacharoff, *Keeping the Peace in a Tense Election, Ghana, 2008*, Innovations for Successful Societies (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2010), <https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/publications/keeping-peace-tense-election-ghana-2008>.

⁵⁰ Emile Ouédraogo, *Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa*, NDU/Acss-Rp-6 (Washington, DC: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 2014).

⁵¹ See “6,000 Soldiers to Be Deployed for Elections,” *Ghanaian Times*, March 6, 2016, https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/6-000-soldiers-to-be-deployed-for-elections-420182_

⁵² “Security Forces Avert Clash at Agbogbloshie,” *Daily Graphic*, January 4, 2017, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Security-forces-avert-clash-at-Agbogbloshie-498583>.

⁵³ See, for example, “Security Forces Avert Clash at Agbogbloshie,” *Daily Graphic*, January 4, 2017, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Security-forces-avert-clash-at-Agbogbloshie-498583>.

⁵⁴ Katherine Meissner, *Elections and Conflict in Ghana*, International Policy Analysis (Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010), <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/07676.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Festus Aubyn, and Mustapha Abdallah, “Sustaining Peace and Stability in Ghana: Appraising the Role of the National Election Security Task Force in the 2012 Elections,” *Journal of African Elections* 12, no 2 (2013): 132–153, <https://doi.org/10.20940/jae/2013/v12i2a8>.

⁵⁶ Lartey and Aning, “The Role of the Security Sector.”

⁵⁷ Issacharoff, *Keeping the Peace*.

⁵⁸ Coalition of Domestic Election Observers, *Election Observers’ Stakeholder Review Workshop on Ghana’s 2016 Presidential and General Elections* (Accra: Ghana Center for Democratic Development, 2017).

⁵⁹ “Ghana’s Voters Renew Commitment to Open and Competitive Elections,” Carter Center, December 8, 2008, https://www.cartercenter.org/news/pr/ghana_elections_prelim_statement_2008.html.

⁶⁰ See Carter Center, “Ghana’s Voters Renew Commitment.”

⁶¹ Aubyn and Abdallah, “Sustaining Peace,” 150.

⁶² Personal communication with author. August 22, 2018.

⁶³ Effia Tenge, “In Solidarity with the Military on the Loss of Captain Maxwell Adams Mahama,” GhanaWeb, June 2, 2017, <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/In-solidarity-with-the-military-on-the-loss-of-Captain-Maxwell-Adams-Mahama-543869>.

⁶⁴ See Tenge, “In Solidarity.”

⁶⁵ Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi *Modelling Success: Governance and Institution Building in Africa: The Case of Ghana's Electoral Commission* (Accra: Consortium for Development Partnerships and the Center for Democratic Development, 2000).

⁶⁶ Lartey and Aning, "The Role of the Security Sector."

⁶⁷ Several other studies of elections in Ghana have highlighted the importance of repetition and learning. For example, see George Bob-Milliar and Jeffrey Paller, "Democratic Ruptures and Electoral Outcomes in Africa: Ghana's 2016 Election." *Africa Spectrum* 53, no. 1 (2018): 5–35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/000203971805300102>.

⁶⁸ Issacharoff, *Keeping the Peace*, 10.

⁶⁹ Issacharoff, *Keeping the Peace*.

⁷⁰ "Explainer on Violence Flash Points in Ghana's 2016 Elections," Africa Elections, October 28, 2018,

http://www.africanelections.org/ghana/news_detail.php?nws=7400&t=Explainer%20on%20Violence%20Flash%20Points%20in%20Ghana.

⁷¹ Saskia Brechenmacher, "Ghana's Vaunted Electoral Process under Stress," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 1, 2016,

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2016/12/01/ghana-s-vaunted-electoral-process-under-stress-pub-66307>.

⁷² In "Sustaining Peace," Aubyn and Abdallah note that these insights were obtained from Larry Gbevlo-Lartey, "Security Arrangement for the 2012 Elections: Assurance Statement by the National Security Coordinator" (presented at the KAIPTC Colloquium on Preserving National Security in Elections 2012 and Beyond, Accra, Ghana, October 23, 2012).

⁷³ Issacharoff, *Keeping the Peace*, 10.

⁷⁴ For an excellent overview of challenges, see Lartey and Aning, “The Role of the Security Sector.”