

Power, Perception, and Professionalism: Ghana's Evolving Military-Civilian Dynamics in The Fourth Republic (1993–2025).

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Abstract

Ghana's civilian-military relations illustrate a dynamic account of institutional change, characterised by historical challenges and progressive democratic consolidation. This research investigates the complexities of power, perceptions, and professionalism from the civil authorities and military institutions, which have shaped Ghana's military to civilian interactions. The paper examines the historical journey of Ghana's military-civilian relations from periods of military interventions to when Ghana became a democratically governed state. It is important to appreciate the transformation of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) from a participating institution to a professional organisation with a civilian orientation. The study used several methods of research, including archival research of historical records, analysis of institutional documents, systematically analysed academic research literature on civilian-military relations and the use of comparative institutional analysis to trace the evolution of Ghana's military-civilian dynamics. It also utilised the qualitative research methods to interpret historical data and contemporary interactions. Key findings include the nuance of Ghana's civilian-military interactions, marked by gradual improvements in institutional accountability, public perceptions of the Ghanaian Military/GAF and the overall civilian-military relations landscape in Ghana. The findings highlight the importance of constitutional reforms and organisational professionalism as well as strategic interventions in reshaping the military's societal role. GAF's engagement in peacekeeping missions, humanitarian efforts and their contributions to national development have contributed significantly to rebuilding public trust. Ultimately this research offers some innovative recommendations for improving civilian oversight of the military, promoting transparency of institutions and continuing methods to sustain democratic engagement and controls, while also

providing insights for understanding civilian-military relations in a post-colonial African context.

Keywords: Civilian-military dynamics, Democratic consolidation, Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), Professionalism, Civil Control

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1.0 Introduction

Civilian-military relations is a complex aspect of democratic governance, and particularly important in former colonies in Africa, such as Ghana. These relations are fundamental in shaping the interplay between institutions of the state, military organisations and the civilian sphere of society in terms of the complex balance between power, trust and accountability of institutions. In Ghana, these relations have been particularly complex given the historical road from political instability and military interventions to a more stable democratic governance. Civilian-military relations in Ghana began from a deep colonial history that saw the development of layered military structures and authoritarian systems of rule. The end of colonial rule in 1957 and national independence was a turning point in which the military emerged to play a significant political and social role in the newly independent state. The military played an instrumental role in supporting national sovereignty, implementing socialist policies and building social cohesion under the leadership of Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah (Biney, 2018). However, tensions developed between civilian authorities and military leadership over the nature of political control and the means of governance (Biney, 2018). The period between 1966 and 1992 was especially chaotic, with numerous military interventions that dismantled civilian governance. A succession of military regimes (the National Liberation Council, Supreme Military Council and the Provisional National Defence Council) wielded great power, regularly repressing civilian opposition and dissent through human rights abuses. The attempts by the military to intervene did not only undermine democratic institutions but also fractured deeply the trust between military personnel and civilian populations.

The transition to civilian rule in 1993 and the formulation of a new constitution meant a watershed moment in Ghana's political history. In many ways, it symbolised the beginning of a gradual but key transformation in civilian-military relations as the GAF, but also the notion of professionalism related to their expected responsibilities in a democracy, evolved into fully fledged members of international security and peacekeeping actors, and civilian oversight (Asante, 2020).

In understanding how civilian-military relations exist today, there is a complex engagement between historical memories, institutional restructuring, and ongoing discussions about accountability and transparency. Civilian-military relations and the construction of democratic norms in Africa have been in stark contrast. Although there has been a desire to keep memories of interventionism in the political space, the social perceptions are negotiated at a fragile level of trust and scepticism for those historical experiences. It is vital to underscore that civilian-military relations involve deeper and more dynamic power relations that must be situated in the context of institutional transformations associated with post-colonial governance. In sum, this means the rebuilding of trust and professional civilian-military relations to establish some meta conditions where all democratic principles, approaches, norms, rules, procedures, and structures can be embedded within the state. As already demonstrated, the demand for trust and legitimacy also requires consideration of the historical context, by way of institutional mechanisms, and the power relations that continue to occur between civilian institutions of authority and military organisations. In this paper, we will explore the theme of civilian-military relations in Ghana, with a specific emphasis on the historical changes and evolution of civilian-military relations since 1993 during the Fourth Republic (1993-2025). The paper will examine the trajectories of civilian-military relations; contemporary challenges facing civilian-military relations, and possibilities for enhancing both institutional integrity and civilian governance emanating from democratic governance. By looking at the complexity of civilian-military relations between military institutions, civilian authorities, and public perceptions, the study aims to enhance knowledge, understanding, and contribute to the process of democratic consolidation in the post-colonial context of Africa.

This paper hypothesizes that since the establishment of Ghana's Fourth Republic (1993-2025), civilian-military relations have transformed extraordinarily from politicised and interventionist characteristics to an institutionalised and stable framework, premised on GAF professionalism

and assertiveness of civilian authority, focused primarily on national security and international peacekeeping. The transformation of civilian-military relations in Ghana is both cause and, consequence of a variety of factors leading to the establishment and subsequently the consolidation of democracy in the country.

2.0 Literature Review

The terms ‘Civil-military’ and ‘Civilian-military’ relations are often used interchangeably, but they have nuanced differences in scholarly discourse based on their context and application. Civil-military relations refer to the broad framework of interactions between civilian government institutions and the military as an institution. It typically refers to interactions, dependencies, and dynamics between civil authorities and the military as an institution focusing on governance and control issues. This concept encompasses the principles of civilian control over the military, the military’s role in policy making, and the balance of power between military and civilian leadership within the state (Huntington, 1981; Feaver, 1996).

On the other hand, civilian-military relations focus more specifically on the interactions between ordinary civilians and military personnel. This concept involves the everyday relationships and perceptions that civilians have with the military, including issues like the military’s accessibility, transparency and involvement in community activities (Kohn, 1997). This paper delt with both concepts as they interrelate in a broader discourse of the relationship between the military, civilians and the political class in Ghana.

The historical evolution of civilian-military relations in Ghana is deeply intertwined with the country's colonial past, struggles for independence, and subsequent efforts to establish stable governance structures. Colonial legacies, marked by the imposition of military structures and hierarchical authority, played a significant role in shaping early interactions between civilians and the military in Ghana (Yaya, 2021). The major shift in Ghana's history from colonisation to independence in 1957 represented a momentous event that thrust the military into a prominent position in the new state.

In Ghana's early post-independence years with President Kwame Nkrumah as the head of state, the military supported the government's policies for a socialist trajectory and to establish sovereignty for Ghana. Interestingly, it did not take long for the military to eventually come to loggerheads with the civilian authorities on questions of political turf, economic pursuits, and human rights (Biney, 2018). These developments manifested into a recurring pattern of military involvement in Ghana's politics that culminated in the dismantling of Ghana's civilian governance and democratic institutions consisting of coups and counter/coups.

The overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966 set the stage for a lengthy stint of political turmoil and military rule in Ghana with military regimes that included the National Liberation Council (1966 - 1969), the National Redemption Council (1972 - 1975), the Supreme Military Council (1975 - 1979) as indicators of instability (Marfo, 2013). Civilian dissent in these early years was often met with repression, censorship and human rights abuses against civilian leaders, which added tension to the already fractious relationship with the military.

The transition to civilian rule in 1993 has helped to change the course of Ghana's political history with a new Constitution in 1992, civilian governance structures in place, and the historic departure from military rule. In the early phases of the Fourth Republic, civilian-military relations were characterized by a tense dynamic, marked by suspicion that military actors were connecting their political activities with their responsibilities for internal security (Salihu, 2020). In recent years, Ghana has strengthened civilian control of the armed forces and democratic governance, but relations remain prone to several issues and developments that ultimately brought about the earlier mentioned developments. The recent changes can be characterised as an overall upward trend, with greater professionalism, voluntary adherence to constitutional order, and greater respect for the rule of law, throughout Ghana's armed forces (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001). In short, the military has changed its approach from being formal political actors to become an emerging, professional institution, that operates within a democratic political framework. There

are governmental and parliamentary oversight institutions now that are responsible for managing defence affairs: the defence and security committee of parliament and the Defence procurements board. These oversight mechanisms and institutions provide feebleness of means of accountability and transparency in how parliament, as the requirement of executive authority, develops, leads, and manages defence affairs (Salihu, 2020).

It is necessary to highlight that the historical legacy of military interventionism continues to have impact on civilian-military relations in Ghana, as it has done in other African countries. The experience of coups and authoritarian rule clearly impacted civilian perceptions of the military and purposeful forces for mistrust and tension remain (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001). Several structural socio-political and socio-economic issues, such as poverty, inequality, youth unemployment, etc. could also contribute to deteriorating prospects for democratic stability in Ghana, making the nation still vulnerable to military intervention or the dangerous appeal of populism (Biney, 2018). Within the Ghanaian context, public perceptions of the military are heavily influenced by the historical violence and instability of military rule during the period of 1966 to 1992. In these years when the military assumed governance of the country, the government abused their authority and committed human rights abuses which remain in the minds of the public and has embedded a distrust in the military among some levels of the population. Since the inception of democracy with the passage of the 1992 constitution, the GAF have focused on professionalisation of their ranks and staying out of politics. Since that time, the public perceptions of the military as a reliable institution have improved. The military's use of their capabilities for peacekeeping missions, disaster response, etc., has transformed the nature of military forces within the society and contributed to public trust (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001).

Another factor that has changed public perceptions of the military has been the professionalisation of the GAF. Since the GAF's commitment to professionalism has been characterised by a commitment to democratic

values as well as a non-political stance or at least no partisan politics, this has also contributed to a sense of trustworthiness and reliability among the public. Research illustrates most people perceive the military more favourably as an institution compared to other state institutions such as police or political parties due to defence shortcomings and corruption (Solar, 2022). The GAF's contributions and participation in international peacekeeping missions are also sources of increasing public awareness. There is a sense of pride when they witness positive participation and reputation of their military in known international engagements, leaving self-defined historical legacies.

The military's involvement with development projects as well as human-related development on the ground, which does deserve consideration on public perception, has also important implications for the public perception of the military institution. When the military engages directly in national development, and humanitarian services, there are notable effects seen in public opinion. For example, the recent medical outposts established by the military in previously unmarked remote areas of Ghana, while largely a defensive contribution, also serve in value of a more positive message of national development. The militaries recent dredging activity in coastal urban areas demonstrates their military ability and versatility, however the action is of significance for a human and social development perspective. Beyond defending the state, as a combatant national body institutionally unique, the GAF's active promise of development (Gilman, 2012) demonstrates significant domains of a more positive public perception of the military as a positive social force, private and public partner.

There are lots of good news but concerns remain about military accountability and human right issues. There is use of excessive force by military personnel, especially during incidents of civil disobedience, which generates public protests and demands for accountability. Transparency around military behaviour and accountability of personnel should be a vital way of maintaining and growing public trust.

The essence of civilian oversight of the military remains a pillar of democratic governance and is necessary to maintain the legitimacy of the

GAF. People's attitudes toward the military will be shaped by the civilian oversight provided by authorities and how the military is bound by law to perform its mandate. Strengthening institutions like parliamentary defence committees and developing open dialogue between the military and civil society, are practical (Van Rensburg et al., 2020). This is particularly true for the disclosure and accountability measures that should be in place to foster the positive relationship between the military and civilians.

In Ghana, debates about military excesses and indiscretions often occur through the lens of history. Events of military indiscretions and excesses are especially common with military interventions over the course of 27 years of military governments between 1966 and 1992, where there were many documented cases of extrajudicial killings, torture, and intimidation of political party opposition and civilians (Agyeman-Duah, 2008). These events are still heavily embedded into the collective memory of Ghanaians, creating an irrational fear of the military. Some ongoing academic debate is that the legacy of the abuses continues to shape contemporary views, images and instances of military violence (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004).

Unlike historical perspectives of analyses, contemporary critiques concentrate on recent incidents involving the military use of disproportionate force in suppressing civil disturbances. Some critics claim that these incidents reveal a long-established culture of impunity in military service, where lack of accountability often prevails. Some commentaries alternatively acknowledge that these actions may be isolated instances of indiscretion, rather than a reduction to a systemic level, claiming the military operates with civilian oversight and within the rule of law in contemporary Ghana (Van Rensburg et al., 2020).

There are also discussions related to the effectiveness of institutional responses to military indiscretions and excesses. Some argue that the GAF has made considerable advances in the professionalisation of their ranks, undertaking reforms that have sought to reduce abuses in the first instance (Gilman, 2012). Some of the various reforms are improved training in human rights, justifiable application of rules of engagement in times of civil disorder, and the constitutional provision of establishing mechanisms

for civilian oversight. However, others contend that these mechanisms are insufficient, citing that the mere existence of indiscretion and excesses suggest a requirement for deeper structural responses to the military institution. There are calls for greater legislative meaning and structures, and the establishment of independent agencies to investigate and prosecute military indiscretions and violations (Solar, 2022).

A further dimension of critique relates to the social implications of military indiscretions and excesses. Advocates for reform point towards the extremes of military impunity as an erosion of public trust in state institutions, and that this in turn is likely to generate unrest (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). They argue that public trust in the military is crucial for preserving social cohesion and avoiding institutionalised violence and or democratic insecurity. On the flip side, some analysts posit that rather trust in the military remains considerably high, despite periodic instances of extreme violations as a result of the military's relatively non-partisan role and contributions to national security and development (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001).

Some scholars have called for broad-stretch human rights education within the military and for an independent oversight mechanism (Van Rensburg et al., 2020). Others take the view on the need for community involvement and community discussions to bridge the gap between civilians and the military and create understanding and partnership (Gilman, 2012). Ultimately, the discussion demonstrates the necessity for a multi-faceted approach, interlinking the legal, institutional, and societal means to address and avoid military wrongdoings and excesses in Ghana.

Two key issues in the inter-agency dynamics between the military, police, and media in Ghana are: the complex, evolving relationships – marked by cooperation and conflict – that shape security governance; and the resulting impact on how governance and civil freedoms are exercised. Exploring such dynamics is pivotal for critically interrogating how the balance of power is held between the agents, the countervailing mechanism for accountability, and how different agents establish and enact their role in positioning their respective institutions, all in the name of democratic governance and stability.

A central theme of the debate of inter-agency relations between military - civil police - media is the importance of working collaboratively and cooperating in order to ensure public safety and order while also respecting the right to inform the public. Proponents of cooperation include the military and police because in times of crises such as natural disasters, civil unrest or a major terrorist incident, they often have to cooperate. In situations, clear communication and the agreement to operational duties for each agency is very important. Evaluative studies have documented cooperative benefits related to joint operations or activities involving the police and military that clearly delineate basic understandings with respect shown by all parties (Eyerman & Strom, 2008; Curtis, 2015).

The media plays a pivotal role in disseminating information quickly to the public, which can support the efforts of both the military and police by providing accurate and timely updates.

Contrastingly, other arguments emphasise the jurisdictional tensions and conflicts that often arise between these agencies. The military and civil police have fundamentally different mandates: the military is typically focused on national defence, external threats and protection of national sovereignty and when called upon assist in internal security. While the police handle internal security and law enforcement. Although this divergence is clear some duplication of deployments can lead to clashes over authority and operational control, especially in overlapping areas such as public disorder and crowd control. Scholars argue that without clear legal frameworks and defined boundaries, these tensions can undermine the effectiveness of operations and erode public trust (Setyawan, 2022). The media's role in highlighting these tensions can either exacerbate conflicts by sensationalising disputes or aid in resolving them by advocating for transparency and accountability.

The relationship between these agencies and the media is another area of contention. The media serves as the bridge between the public and security forces, shaping public perception through its reporting. Positive media coverage can bolster public support for military and police operations, while negative coverage can lead to scepticism and mistrust. Critics argue

that media often sensationalises events, which can lead to misinterpretation and a lack of public understanding about the roles and challenges faced by the military and police (McCartney, 2011). On the contrary, advocates of a stronger media presence assert independent journalism is a necessity for accountability and against abuse of power by imposing checks on what the police and military do.

Another argument deals with the different training and organisational culture between military and civil police which are not conducive to collaboration. The military has a hierarchical command and control structure while the police act according to orders connected to communities and territorial responsibilities. Each of these is a challenge to joint working where inter agency adaptability and understanding are critical. Nevertheless, inter-agency trainings to develop culture and cooperation could help address these issues, and cultivate mutual respect and communication (Hjelum & Lægreid, 2019). The media can also help the process by publishing stories of successful collaboration and sharing best practices.

The issues about inter-agency relations give way to discussions about potential recommendations for further cooperation and reducing friction. The recommendations from experts call for a formal framework to establish inter-agency documentation. Role clarifications and responsibilities should be established and reviewed through joint military and police training programmes. The military, police and media should also have regular formal communication channels (Steiro & Torgersen, 2020). The media can also help to reveal any political agenda in any investigative journalism that supports transparency and accountability, and improve the awareness and participation of the public (McClure Haughey et al., 2020).

Finally, the future of civilian-military relations in Ghana's fourth Republic is worth investigating, as there are many complicating factors probably external as well as internal.

Some scholars argue that the future of civilian-military relations in the fourth Republic of Ghana is predominantly positive, due to the

professionalism of GAF and their democratic principles. Since return to democratic rule in 1992 GAF has concentrated on developing professionalism, abandoned political issues and contributed to the promotion of democratic governance. Therefore, the stage has been set to build a relationship based on respect from civilian populations and mutual interaction with security services, which will sustain good relations and offer prospects for stable and constructive relations (Salihu, 2020). Meanwhile, the GAF's participation as a leader in international peacekeeping missions continues to impact their operational culture and effectiveness and has also improved the perception of the GAF at home and abroad.

Some researchers highlight persistent problems rooted in historical legacies as well as institutional trust. The military coups and periods of authoritarian rule in Ghana's past continue to cast a shadow over contemporary civilian-military relations. These historical experiences have left scepticisms and mistrust among some segments of the population towards the military. While the GAF has made significant strides in distancing itself from politics, the lingering memories of military rule still influence public perceptions and can pose a barrier to full harmonious relations (Salihu, 2016). Ensuring that the military remains apolitical and reinforcing democratic norms are ongoing challenges.

A positive argument revolves around the military's role in national development projects, which has enhanced their image and relationship with civilian authorities. The GAF has been actively involved in infrastructure development, health services, and disaster response. These activities have positioned the military as a key player in national development beyond traditional defence roles, contributing to a more positive public perception and stronger civilian-military cooperation (Gilman, 2012). This multifaceted role helps integrate the military more closely with civilian life and fosters a perception of the military as a force for good within society. However, there are contrasting views on human rights and accountability that affect the prospects of civilian-military relations. Instances of alleged human rights abuses, especially during

enforcement of civil order, have sparked public concern and criticism. For example, during the 2020 elections, the Techiman South shooting incident, which resulted in the tragic deaths of eight civilians, underscored the urgent need for enhanced oversight and accountability mechanisms within the military. Ensuring the adherence of the military to human rights standards and holding them accountable for misconduct is crucial for maintaining public trust and positive relations.

Another argument is the strengthening of civilian oversight system, which is seen as a key factor in the prospects for healthy civilian-military relations. Effective parliamentary oversight, active civil society engagement, and transparent communication channels between these two parties are essential for military operations within the bounds of the law and supports democratic governance (Van Rensburg et al., 2020).

The reduction of these monitoring mechanisms works to reduce the risk of military overreach and helps to build a culture of accountability and trust. Conversely, some would argue that continued reforms are needed to sustain and improve civilian-military relations including continuous training in democratic norms and human rights for military members, and educational programmes for civilians to appreciate the military role and understand the military challenges (Aning, 2015). Mutual understanding and respect are important in bridging gaps in perceptions and facilitating a cooperative relationship. While the military's role in democracy is changing, there is an emphasis on engaging with one another on emerging issues while maintaining equilibrium to enhance national stability and development.

Discrepancies in the literature on civil–military relations – particularly in terms of geographical focus, methodological approaches, and conceptual references – remain largely unaddressed and require closer attention. Pion-Berlin and Dudley (2020) and Feaver and Kohn (2021) investigate aspects of civilian-military relations mostly in a Western context, specifically the USA, exploring the interactions between soldiers, civilians and political leadership within established democracies. While they illustrate a number of useful observations concerning civilian-military relations in an

established democracy, the dynamics take place in a way that obscures the challenges, interactions, and reactivity that arise in other democracies that are less established, in many instances such as the African context. Growing the literature focusing on the African perspective is a major gap that requires to be addressed, as civilian-military relations occur with a historic, cultural, and political background. Khisa and Day (2020) offer some potential remedial measures to address these major gaps by developing another typology of civil military relations lens that regards both domestic and external influences in Africa. There is a need for further empirical work to refine and expand these typologies into models of civil-military relations that can be applied across various African countries.

Pion-Berlin and Dudley (2020) and Feaver and Kohn (2021) use scientometric review analysis as their methodological approach which gives a broad snapshot of the field by identifying themes and issues. While this approach is useful for identifying areas of overlap and mapping the literature to identify emerging trends, it rarely provides the specificity required to advance our understanding of complicated long standing, context-specific relations inherent in civilian-military relations.

Alternatively, Harig et al. (2022) employ a combination of conceptual, theoretical, and empirical inquiry, using an analytical tool they developed to examine the impact of operational practices on civil-military relations. Khisa and Day (2020), use a typology-based approach to reconceptualise civilian-military relations in Africa and applied a particular typology (the concept of autonomy), which is coherent to move conversations forward; however, it is an expensive method and may require more empirical work to test and modify their conceptualisation and typology related to civilian-military relations in Africa. While their foundational work broadens our understanding of civilian-military relations on the African continent, there remains a lack of longitudinal studies which could track civilian-military relations historically and highlight change or lack of change in relation to political and security shifts on the one hand and the anomalous manner civilian-military relations historically reflect relations with citizens, on the other hand. In contrast, Salihu (2020) and Asante (2020) focus specifically

on Ghana, utilising qualitative methods, including field research and interviews, to explore the country's unique civilian-military relations. Salihu (2020) explores the concept of concordance within Ghana's civilian-military relations, while Asante (2020) examines how democratic civilian-military bargains have evolved in the country. These studies contribute valuable insights into Ghana's specific context, but there remains a gap in comparative studies that could contextualise these findings within broader African or global frameworks and also highlighting the matter on civilian-military relations.

Overall, the existing literature reveals several methodological and contextual gaps that need to be addressed to also deepen our understanding of civilian-military relations, particularly in non-Western contexts. There is a clear need for more empirical research focusing on African countries, with methodologies that go beyond broad scientometric reviews to include detailed qualitative and quantitative studies. Additionally, the development of context-specific typologies and frameworks, as initiated by Khisa and Day (2020), should be expanded and validated across different regions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of civilian-military relations globally and its subsidiary subject of civilian-military relations.

It is against this backdrop that necessitated this study aiming to address the state, challenges and prospects of civilian-military relations in the fourth Republic of Ghana.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

The study of civilian-military relations is grounded in theories that explore the balance of power, control, and interaction between civilian authorities and the military institution within a state. This paper draws primarily on Samuel P. Huntington's (1957) theory of civilian-military relations, complemented by insights from Morris Janowitz (1960) and contemporary scholars, to analyse Ghana's evolving military-civilian dynamics under the Fourth Republic (1993–2025).

Huntington's original contribution is critical in establishing the contemporary discussion on civilian-military relations. Huntington (1957)

examines the model civilian-military relationship and argues that there is a need for "objective civilian control"; where the military professionally coordinates its affairs- particularly issues of defence of state and security protection- within the purview of civilian political leadership. This conceptual separation fosters professional restraint from the military and civilian leaders from politicising or misconstruing military responsibilities in government.

In the case of Ghana's Fourth Republic, Huntington's model reinforces the need to professionalise the military and bolster civilian authority over a once disjointed military in a persistent political state of coups d'état following its independence and subsequent democratic developments. Democratic governance in Ghana became a watershed moment in democratic transition in 1993, particularly when civilian authorities recognise and acknowledge the need to create distinct boundaries and respect between the military and civilian structures of political power.

Morris Janowitz (1960) adds to Huntington's framework with emphasis on military/civilian integration and convergence. Janowitz (1960) argues that modern militaries should and must change for democratic contexts and must become sufficiently aware, attuned, and responsive to the values and expectations of civilian society. Janowitz's emphasizes the importance of socialisation of the military, neutrality gravitation in politics and professional aspect of the military within the democratic arena.

Ghana's evolving civilian-military relations also denote similar dynamics, given the military's increasing embrace of democratic norms, participation in a peacekeeping mission, and professional development. Janowitz's work articulates the progressively changing perceptions of the military as a political actor, a clear distinguishing feature is an attitude of a disciplined institution, under civilian authority to serve the nation.

Recent literature, building off foundational works of Huntington (1957) and Janowitz (1960), identifies civilian control as a continuing, negotiated process involving legal parameters, institutional checks, and public attitudes. Theories on civilian supremacy highlight that effective control is

more than formal authority. It underscores legitimacy, transparency and accountability.

In Ghana, civilian control has been institutionalised by constitutional provisions, Parliamentary oversight, and security sector reform measures. These structures have been established in order to preclude military interventions in political affairs, while servicing the professionalism and capability of the armed forces. Thus, the civilian-military relations can be characterised as a mutually accepted, functional relationship based on the concepts of balance of power, trust and mutual respect which are integral to any democratic consolidation effort. This theoretical framework provides the basis from which this paper analyses Ghana's civilian-military relations in order to explore how the post-1993 evolution of professionalisation and civilian oversight helped to shape the perceptions of both categories of actors, and the resulting implications for democratic control measures and pressures. The Ghanaian experience is contextualised in the theories outlined above, and contributes to further understanding of civilian-military relations as potential enablers or hindrances to democratic governance in emerging and more established democracies.

4.0 Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is fundamentally qualitative, designed to provide an in-depth and nuanced understanding of civilian-military relations in Ghana.

The primary data sources for the research were semi-structured interviews and archival research. Interviews were conducted with a purposive and snowball sample of key stakeholders, including ranked military personnel, public service workers, civil society representatives, academic experts, and community members. This approach ensured a broad spectrum of perspectives and allowed for a comprehensive exploration of experiences, perceptions, and historical understandings of civilian-military relations. The interview protocol was carefully developed to elicit detailed narratives and insights, focusing on both contemporary and historical dimensions of the subject.

Archival research formed a critical component of the methodology, involving systematic analysis of historical records, government and military documents, parliamentary proceedings, and media archives. This provided essential context and facilitated a longitudinal perspective on the evolution of civilian-military relations in Ghana, especially in tracing institutional changes and continuities from the colonial period through the Fourth Republic.

To complement the qualitative findings and provide additional context, the study incorporated elements of descriptive statistical analysis. Structured surveys were administered to a stratified random sample of Ghanaian residents, ensuring representation across key demographic and geographic groups. The survey instrument was based on validated scales to measure trust, perceptions, and attitudes toward military institutions. The quantitative data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means, which served to summarise general patterns in public attitudes.

The analysis of qualitative data was conducted through systematic thematic analysis. Interview transcripts and archival documents were coded to identify recurring themes, patterns, and interpretative frameworks relevant to civilian-military relations. The integration of qualitative and descriptive quantitative data allowed for methodological triangulation, enhancing the validity and reliability of the research by cross-verifying findings from multiple sources.

Ethical considerations were central to the research design. Anonymity and data protection protocols were rigorously maintained throughout the research process. Participants were fully informed about the objectives of the study, potential risks, and their right to withdraw at any time.

5.0 Data Analyses and Discussion

The demographic details of respondents in this study on civilian–military relations in Ghana - focusing on the challenges and prospects for the Ghana Armed Forces - offer a clear overview of the composition and diversity of the sample population. This section presents key demographic

characteristics, including age, gender, educational level, occupation, and length of residence in Ghana.

The age distribution of the respondents illustrates that the sample consisted of various age groups, suggesting that the sample may be diverse groups who may have some knowledge base and experiences on the subject matter. Moreover, they had experienced the thirty-two years of constitutional rule to at least be able to provide an informed response to the survey. The likely age categories of the survey participants were cantered in the 36–45-year-old (30.5%) and the 46–55-year-old (31.3%) accounting for a total of 61.8%. Younger age groups, specifically 18–25 years and 26–35 years, constitute 8.8% and 19.8% respectively, while respondents aged 56 and above make up 9.8%.

The gender distribution reveals a significant skew towards male respondents. Males constitute 76.5% (306 respondents) of the sample, whereas females make up 23.5% (94 respondents). This disproportionate representation may reflect the demographics of the population engaged in or interested in civilian-military relations.

In terms of educational attainment, a large portion of the respondents have completed tertiary education (48.8%), followed closely by those with postgraduate education (41.3%). Only a small fraction of the respondents has no formal education (0.3%) or only secondary education (9.8%). This indicates that the majority of the respondents have attained at least a secondary level of education and therefore knowledgeable enough to engage in a fair, reliable and discerning discourse.

The occupational background of the respondents shows a variety of professions. Military personnel constitute the largest group at 39.3%, highlighting a significant interest or involvement from those within the military. Civilians in the public sector (24.3%) and private sector (21.5%) also represent substantial portion of the sample, indicative of utmost interest in the topic. Students account for 6.3%, and other occupations make up 8.8%.

The length of residence data indicates that most respondents have lived in Ghana for a considerable period and might have knowledge and experience to better appreciate the relationship between civilians and military over the years. An overwhelming 96.5% have resided for more than 10 years, suggesting a stable and established population. Only a small percentage have lived in Ghana for less than 1 year (0.5%), 1-5 years (1.3%), or 6-10 years (1.8%).

The demographic data from the study reveals a diverse and predominantly male sample with a wide range of age groups, high levels of education, and a mix of military and civilian occupations. Most respondents have a long-term residence, indicating stability within the community. These demographic insights are crucial for understanding the perspectives and experiences related to civilian-military relations in Ghana. The data is summarised in the Table 4.2 below.

Table 4. 1: Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	18-25	35	8.8	8.8
	26-35	79	19.8	28.5
	36-45	122	30.5	59.0
	46-55	125	31.3	90.3
	56 and above	39	9.8	100.0
Gender	Male	306	76.5	76.5
	Female	94	23.5	100.0
Education	No formal education	1	0.3	0.3
	Secondary education	39	9.8	10
	Tertiary education	195	48.8	58.8
	Postgraduate education	165	41.3	100
Occupation	Student	25	6.3	6.3
	Civilian (Public Sector)	97	24.3	30.5

	Civilian (Private Sector)	86	21.5	52
	Military Personnel	157	39.3	91.3
	Other	35	8.8	100
Length of residence	Less than 1 year	2	0.5	0.5
	1-5 years	5	1.3	1.8
	6-10 years	7	1.8	3.5
	More than 10 years	386	96.5	100.0

Source: Field survey, (2024).

The prospects of civilian-military relations for the Ghana Armed Forces

The table below contains the opportunities to improve civilian-military relations in the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) as identified by a survey of 400 respondents. The opportunities were ranked based on the Relative Importance Index (RII). The highest-ranked opportunity was to institute feedback mechanisms for civilian concerns, with a mean score of 4.31, a standard deviation of 0.884, and an RII of 0.863. This indicates a strong agreement among the respondents regarding making opportunities for feedback from civilians, to improve relations with the military. A close second was citizen education programmes regarding military roles and duties, with a mean of 4.30, standard deviation of 0.875, and RII of 0.860; again, it shows that increasing public awareness through education is valued.

The third opportunity identified was the establishment of regular dialogue forums for civilian–military engagement, with a mean score of 4.17, a standard deviation of 0.937, and a Relative Importance Index (RII) of 0.834. These figures indicate strong agreement on the need for ongoing dialogue mechanisms to reduce misunderstandings and foster improved relations.

Fourth, increasing cooperation between GAF and civilians on community projects had a mean score of 4.16, standard deviation of 0.979, and RII of 0.832. Again, this points to confidence that working together on community projects, could improve civilian-military relations.

The middle-ranking opportunities were promoting military involvement in local development initiatives and the military's role in peace and security, which had mean scores of 4.13 and RIIs of 0.826, and 0.826; this reflects the belief that visible military engagement in support of the local community and engagement in peacekeeping, can enhance citizen confidence in the Ghanaian military and the public's relationship with military organizations. Another valuable opportunity – though slightly below the overall mean – was the call for increased public recognition of the military's humanitarian activities (mean = 4.11, standard deviation = 1.007, RII = 0.823). This suggests that public engagement with the military could be enhanced through greater visibility and publicity of its humanitarian missions.

At the lower end of ranked opportunities, although worth noting, were joint civilian-military training, mean score 4.05, RIIs of 0.810, while still considered important, they were viewed as slightly less critical than efforts to improve mutual understanding and trust to strengthen civil-military relations.

The least prioritised prospect was the development of policies promoting civilian oversight, with a mean of 3.55, a standard deviation of 1.196, and an RII of 0.711. This indicates that while oversight is recognised as necessary, it may not be viewed as immediately impactful as other initiatives for improving civilian-military relations.

The study underscores the importance of various strategies to enhance civilian-military relations for the GAF. Establishing feedback mechanisms and educational programmes about military roles are deemed the most effective measures. Regular dialogues, increased collaboration, and military involvement in local projects are also crucial. Although transparency, accountability, and civilian oversight rank lower, they remain

significant components of a comprehensive approach to improving civilian-military relations. The relatively high mean scores across all prospects indicate broad support for these initiatives, suggesting a positive outlook for strengthening these relations in Ghana.

Table 4. 2: Prospects of civilian-military relations for the Ghana Armed Forces

Prospects	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	RII	Rank
Establishing feedback mechanisms for civilian concerns will improve relations.	400	4.31	0.884	0.863	1 st
Supporting educational programmes about military roles and duties will enhance public awareness.	400	4.30	0.875	0.860	2 nd
Establishing regular dialogue fora will enhance communication between civilians and military.	400	4.17	0.937	0.834	3 rd
Increased collaboration on community projects will improve civilian-military relations.	400	4.16	0.979	0.832	4 th
Encouraging military involvement in local development projects will boost community relations.	400	4.13	0.940	0.826	5 th
Enhancing the role of military in peacekeeping and security will gain public confidence.	400	4.13	0.969	0.826	6 th

Increasing the visibility of military humanitarian efforts will positively influence perceptions.	400	4.11	1.007	0.823	7 th
Promoting joint disaster response initiatives will improve cooperation and efficiency.	400	4.08	0.914	0.818	8 th
Implementing joint civilian-military training programs will foster mutual understanding.	400	4.05	1.070	0.810	9 th
Enhanced transparency and accountability of military operations will build trust.	400	4.02	1.034	0.806	10 th
Developing policies promoting civilian oversight will ensure checks and balances.	400	3.55	1.196	0.711	11 th

Source: Field survey, (2024).

Recent research on civilian-military relations across various contexts reflect several key themes and arguments that both support and differ from the findings of the study on the GAF. This important step in focusing on establishing feedback mechanisms for civilian issues indicates a shift towards civilian accountability and the public reigniting its view of the military as a public protector. Similar findings from other contexts were noted in Sierra Leone where researchers have identified the need for stated channels of communication that are transparent in order to assist building trust between military structures and civilians (Albrecht & Jackson, 2014). Placing feedback mechanism high in the ranking within the Ghanaian context demonstrates a shared global emphasis on directly and meaningfully engaging civilian populations toward the purpose of building relationships. Researchers generally agree that constructive improvement

in communication, co-operation and understanding between civilians and military enhance stability, security and development of all nations (Hutchful & Fayemi, 2005).

Educational programmes on military roles, ranked second among recommended actions in the GAF study, reflect broader scholarly consensus that informing the public about the armed forces is essential to demystifying military work. For example, research in post-conflict Liberia showed that educating the public about the military's non-combat functions can have a positive impact on public perceptions and trust (Soeters & Van Ouytsel, 2014). The symmetry apparent here indicates a commonality in understanding across different regions that the best way to extinguish mistrust and develop improved civilian-military relations is to educate the public about the military's functions.

The importance of regular dialogue forums, the third-ranked action in the study was found to be a common theme as well across the literature. In Nigeria, for example, researchers argued that structured dialogue between civilians and the military was important for handling grievances and building mutual understanding (Collier and Hoeffler, 2006). The researchers indicated that structured dialogue facilitates not just disputes, but provides a mechanism for solving problems collaboratively. This agreement across two distinct contexts reinforces the findings that regular periodised dialogue works best towards positive civilian-military relations. Collaboration with the community, and the military's role in them for local development, was ranked four and five in the Ghana Study, albeit as one of several themes noted by the study. The theme about integrating the military into community development in order to assist and improve relations through development is not new, and consistent throughout. Uganda, for example, has experimented with military support to local development around infrastructure development, agriculture, and health services although there is little evidence to suggest an improved public perception and a positive public presence of the military (Bryden, 2010). However, if a municipality views the military publicly working towards

welfare on behalf of the municipality in this situation it forges a different relationship and goodwill dynamic as it proposes a civilian-military partnership in community development.

Despite being ranked lower in the study, the focus on transparency, accountability and civilian oversight emerged in the literature as another key theme. In Kenya, studies illustrate the contextual difficulties and the recognition of the need to enhance transparency in the military to help avoid abuses and build public trust (Diamint, 2015). As mentioned earlier, these categories are fundamental. With less emphasis on transparency in the Ghanaian context, perhaps this indicates while transparency is valued, it is seen as incidental compared to direct engagement and visible involvement in the community. Nevertheless, there is a commitment through the literature to reinforce a general incorporation of transparency and accountability as part of an overall strategy to improve civilian-military relations.

In summary, the study reflects some larger themes present in the literature relevant to cultivating Civilian-military relations: emphasis on feedback mechanisms, public education, dialogue and collaboration within the community. As acknowledged, transparency and, accountability are equally important; however, neither of them was as highly valued in Ghana, suggesting a specific but delineated approach: direct engagement and visible involvement within the community. Collectively, these findings highlight a multifaceted approach to fostering civilian-military relations, direct engagement, public education, and structural change, to create trust, social contract and collaboration between civilians and the military.

6.0 Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The analysis and evidence in the paper substantiate the hypothesis that Ghana's civilian-military relations have evolved into a regime of stability, professionalism, and institutionalism focused on national security, international peacekeeping, and civilian control since the Fourth Republic. The study of civilian and military relations in Ghana reveals a rich history, spanning from colonial rule to democracy, and following a remarkable

course that has included major transformations in civilian-military relations. Initially launched in a context of military interventionism, and continued political turmoil, civilian-military relations have become more professional and democratic.

The historic analysis indicates that Ghana experienced several years of military rule (1966-1992), when military regimes interrupted the full mechanics of civilian governance, and where commitment to human rights was disbanded. The path and years of military intervention bred mistrust that changed a habit of civilian perception for many households in Ghana over decades. However, in 1993 Ghana transitioned to a civilian government under the 1992 constitution and it appears this was an important moment in reframing and re-institutionalising civilian-military relations.

The findings of the study shows that the GAF transitioning almost 60 years from a direct political force to a more institutional and led force acting under statutes as defined by public legislation law in 1992, with attention towards national security and international peacekeeping. Ghanaian military sentiment is incrementally increasing civilian confidence, mission after mission including humanitarian work, disaster response, and international peacekeeping.

The study also leads to suggestions for future research, including addressing the challenges and issues that emerge through interactions with past military control history that deliver decisions and perceptions. Situations of using excessive force or other actions and the lack of accountability by military forces remain important and problematic recipe for military intervention, and perseverance by students who place positive stock in democratic civilian-military relations in Ghana. The study underscores the need for meaningful civilian oversight, institutionalized mechanisms, and transparent practices to deepen democratic civil-military relations.

Another important finding is the complexity of the military-civil police-and media-state relationship. The agency relationship includes benefits that can be collaborative, while tension and competition create dangerous consequences. However, through professionalisation and trust, understanding, and lines of authority may emerge that promote clarity of the rule of law, function of legality, and credibility amongst the agencies. Ultimately, it can be argued that civilian-military relations represent a nuanced and complicated progression of the military institution into a democratic institutional space. While significant progress has been made towards democratic processes and training behaviours of the military, much work remains ahead to eradicate the legacy of military rule, to strengthen accountability and achieve the optimal balance between military specialisation, its role in supporting democratic principles, and the multiple accountability mechanisms expected within civilian governance.

7.0 Recommendations

Based on the analysis of civilian-military relations in Ghana, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Comprehensive Human Rights and Democratic Education Programme:** The government, through the Ministry of Defence, must create a mandatory, multi-tiered training course for military personnel that includes, but not limited to education on human rights. That training programme must include, or be built on, the integration of critical thinking, democratic values and ethical decision-making. The education must include the historical lessons of Ghana's military interventions, civilian control; constitutionalism; and the military's role in ensuring that key democratic institutions continue to function.
- **Independent Oversight Mechanism:** The Government should create an independent, multi- stakeholder oversight body - empowered with rigorous investigative and prosecutorial capacity to respond to military excesses and unhealthy military behaviours. It should have civil society representation, legal determiners, human rights organisations and other appropriate parliamentary committees.

The Independent Oversight Mechanism (IOM) would be responsible for undertaking transparent investigations into allegations of military excesses and commence accountability actions to restore public confidence in the military.

- **Community Engagement / Dialogue Platforms:** The GAF should create structured platforms for dialogue that facilitates legitimate continuous dialogue between GAF personnel, civil populations and civil society organisations. The focus of these dialogue platforms should be more towards creating common ground and demonstrating commitment to community concerns, and more importantly, to show commitment to national development agendas committed beyond the traditional security operational domain. This engagement, though with a history of trust deficit is designed to bridge the gaps and nurture more collaborative work placements with civilians and the military.
- **Better Inter-Agency Collaboration Framework:** The government should have in place a more fundamental inter-agency cooperation protocol framework that defines specific operational boundaries, clearer communications, joint responses by civil police, military, and other security or regulatory institutions. This protocol should include obligatory cross-training, collaborative simulation exercises, and inclusion of a common communication protocol designed to enhance operational efficiency and help dissolve squabbles over jurisdiction.
- **Media Engagement and Transparency Strategy:** The GAF should put in place a clear engagement strategy whereby transparency and open engagement between the military and media organisations grow continuously. The strategy should involve various measures, including regular press briefings across all services; training media relations and spokesperson skills to articulate clearly and effectively; put in place channels of reporting military activities that maximises responsible reporting and useful media engagement. Overall, the

strategy should aim not only to improve how military activities are reported, but also to foster a stronger relationship between the military and the media to better inform the public.

- **Professional Development and Career Progression Reforms:** The government working with all relevant stakeholders should redesign the military career progression mechanisms, whereby merit is based on sustainability - ethical behaviour and personal adherence to democratic norms and values demonstrated by the officers. Such a model would also include the need to design performance benchmarks to measure officers on whether they are undertaking democratic processes and community engagement and responsibility - not by how well they perform their traditional roles as military officers.
- **Technology Enabled Accountability Mechanism:** The government should also develop a digital strategy to include a platform or channels to reporting and tracking military operations, misconduct investigations on operations, internal accountability actions for the GAF. The platform should give real time updates to the public, allow access to non-sensitive information, and establish a mechanism for civilians to report queries or concerns or potential misconduct, etc. through secure channels.

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