Hybrid Security Governance in the Ghana Armed Forces

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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INTRODUCTION

The hybridity concept, coined by Volker Boege, entails the interactions of a wide variety of *formal* and *informal* institutions in complementary or competing ways, while influencing the development of public policies. Similarly, the concept of *hybrid security*, which flows from hybridity, focuses, in the current use, on how formalised rules and instruments, as well as informal norms and culture within an institution, such as the military, come together to shape the organisation's governance structure. The case of the Ghana Armed Forces, which will be discussed in this note, represents an important example of hybrid security governance, both in orientation and practice. At the high command level, Ghana's Military is governed by a wide array of formalized instruments, while at the battalion or unit level, management constitutes a hybrid of formalised instruments, as well as informal norms or modes of governance. This model results in hybrid security governance structure.

Here is a brief overview of the processes of how formal and informal arrangements play into the hybrid security governance structure of the Ghanaian Armed Forces. This case shows the way formal and informal modes of governance co-exist, and shape the hybrid security governance structure. Or, to understand how hybrid security governance takes place in the context of formalised systems in which a wide array of rules and informal norms operate alongside each other. These moves help to better understand the formalised instruments and the cultural contexts underpinning the hybrid security governance structure, as well as how they inter-relate with each other. Hence, it allows us to gain a more realistic, informed and in-depth understanding of the workings of hybrid security governance on the ground in everyday soldiering practices. There is a need for such in-depth understandings of hybrid security governance structure.

GHANA ARMED FORCES

Military organisations operate through a hierarchical institutional logic, which, as a mode of reference, shapes actors' choices for sensemaking, sense of self and identity (Thornton et al. 2012). The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) is no exception. In fact, the hierarchy of the GAF is fundamental to its effective and professional functioning. The workings of the hierarchical logic of the GAF is both formal and informal. The formal is established through instruments such as codes of conduct and directives, while the informal is instituted in norms and soldiers' expected behaviour.

Similarly, as a professional body, the GAF is governed by a wide range of formalised instruments, such as the Armed Forces Regulations Volume 2, which deals specifically with discipline. There are also the Armed Forces Regulations Volumes 1, 3, and 4, which deal, respectively, with administration, finance and civilian employees. Other governance instruments are Part I Orders, Command and Staff Instructions and Procedures (CSIPs Volumes 1-6) and Ministry of Defence Instructions (MDIs). These represent formal modes of security governace, or what Jaffe terms "playing by the book" (Jaffe, 1984). However, the hybrid security governance structure plays out mostly in everyday soldiering practices at the battalion or unit level. Here, commanders employ a mixture of formalised instruments and informal socio-cultural norms to manage the workings of the military institution. It is also at the battalion or unit level that formalised instruments and informal norms co-exist to shape the hybrid security governance structure.

One of the areas where formalised rules and informal norms converge is in hierarchy. The management of activities within and the maintenance of hierarchy in a closed institution such as the Ghana Military is a continuous process. It is in these instances that the informal norms and culture (this will be discussed in a moment) feature prominently to shape the hybrid security governance structure. In the GAF, as in all social orders, there are constant negotiations over the meanings of rules, as well as the circumstances in which codes of conduct and military conventions (such as hierarchy) can be tweaked or broken, and by who. Additionally, there are constant dialogues about

how these codes of conduct and military conventions are established and play out in practice (soldierly) in everyday settings. Put differently, in a total institution like the GAF, military conventions, rules and behaviours must be constantly re-enacted and negotiated. It is in these settings and negotiations that hybrid security governance takes shape and can thrive.

Hierarchy is, thus, formalised requirement of how the military operates and how soldiers behave. At the same time, it is informally implemented through norms and behavioral demands. Dumont's conceptualisation of this arrangement adds an important layer by focusing on hierarchy as a social constellation that includes values, such as loyalty, respect for rank, respect for authority, discipline and integrity (Dumont, 1970). Needless to say that these values are crucial in everyday soldiering practices, as well as managing such an institution. In GAF's hybrid security governance structure, commanders use the formal instruments to manage and also demand the aforementioned values from their subordinates. It is in such appeals that the hybrid security structure takes shape and bring together the formal and informal. In short, values are essential and central to hierarchy, and values allow us to move beyond understanding hierrachy as a merely 'bureaucratic structure' (cf. Soeters et al., 2006), but, rather, as a key element of hybrid security governance structure.

An important element of the hierarchical organisation of the Ghana Military is seniority, while date of enlistment, promotion, office (for example, commanding officer (CO) or regimental sergeant major (RSM)) and rank are intertwined and converge to produce hierarchy in the barracks. Seniority is a social mechanism that regulates social relations regarding an individual's affiliation with – in this case – the military (Gamst, 2001). Seniority in the GAF is associated with authority, privilege, prestige and responsibility. Seniority and hierarchy are intertwined. At the same time, seniority and hierarchy are both formal and informal, thus, relevant for the hybrid security governance structure. Concretely, when there are opportunities for travel abroad, and in instances that the opportunities are prestigious and limited, senior officers will be considered first. Seniority is, hence, a tool for producing hierarchy because it orders and arranges soldiers in a particular order. Seniority also has to do with responsibility. In the words of an officer: 'When there are dirty jobs to be done, juniors do them.'

Furthermore, due to the relatively small size of the GAF (between 15,000 and 23,000 operatives), all Ghanaian soldiers know exactly who their superiors and subordinates are, based on their regimental numbers. Unlike the rank insignia, which is visible to everyone, the regimental number is invisible to the outsider. An officer noted that if there were to be a roll call at the barracks, on the parade square, every soldier would know exactly where to stand. Every soldier has a regimental number by which s/he is identified. It is one of the components that determine their seniority and position in the hierarchical arrangement / logic. It is also a key regulator of peer relations, as soldiers know who has the lowest regimental number.

Ranking and appointments are formal determinants of a soldier's seniority, but they can also disrupt the arrangement of seniority in a unit; particularly for the non-commissioned officers (NCOs). Assume that there are four warrant officers at the regiment who were recruited and graduated from training on the same day, and the military is looking to appoint a new unit RSM. These peers end up competing with each other for the post. Since there can be only one RSM in the unit, after a thorough selection process, the most junior among the four is elected to be the RSM. The person who is the most junior in the peer group based on regimental number becomes the most senior through his appointment as RSM, which means his peers have to take orders from him because he has been promoted to the higher rank of senior warrant officer. The preceding paragraphs show how the formal and informal elements play into shaping the hierarchical logic of the Ghana Military.

CULTURE

Cultural elements that intrude into the military barracks shape mostly the informal norms and, eventually, affect the application of the formalised instruments and, by extension, the hybrid security governance structure. Formalised sanctions in Ghana's military have serious social and professional consequences for soldiers. Thus, military operatives go to great lengths to avoid them. This is because all formalised infringements and sanctions are registered on the soldier's professional file for reference; which is part of the formalised instruments in the hybrid governance structure. Professionally, a poor disciplinary record will undermine a soldier's career development. In the GAF, promotions are not only based on performance but also on professional disciplinary record and written recommendations from colleagues and superiors. Colleagues and superiors will be reluctant to write a recommendation in favour of a soldier with doubtful disciplinary record for promotion due to fear of reputational damage.

Additionally, a soldier with a poor professional disciplinary record will be the last to be considered for promotion or important assignments, thus, impeding the operative's career advancement and opportunities. Colleagues will also avoid a soldiers with a record of indiscipline, as interaction with such a soldier could raise questions about one's sense of judgment. That is why formalised sanctions are unpopular (particularly among junior officers and other ranks) and casts the one imposing the sanction as 'wicked, rigid and old'. On the other hand, the preferred informal punishment is considered as 'humane' because it does not have repercussions beyond the unit. In short, in such instances, the formalised rules and informal norms interact with each other, and at the same time, co-exist, to constitute the hybrid security governance structure.

Offending soldiers try hard to avoid formalised sanctions due to the professional implications. *Dwuan toa* as a cultural phenomenon offers an outcome which can be seen as an informal form of governance – a part of hybrid security structure. An offending soldier organises *dwuan toa* to plead with his/her superior not to avert punishment, but to seek an informalised sanction. The cultural practice of pleading via proxies, soldiers note, is rapidly gaining traction in the Ghanaian barracks because it saves offending soldiers a lot of hassle. In that regard, soldiers carefully compose their pleading parties to include respected elders (such as the superior's course mates, village or hometown chiefs or even family heads) because 'you want your superior to listen to your plea'. This cultural practice is, however, undermining the military's practices and disciplinary standards, as superiors are forced to resort to informal sanctions or disregard professional norms and standards. Cultural pardon could be viewed as a form of informal governance, which can be seen as part of the hybrid security governance at play in the Ghana Armed Forces.

The socio-cultural practice of pleading for clemency (Amoah & Afranie, 2015) poses challenges for military commanders to uphold the high military professional norms and disciplinary standards. That is because this cultural practice put pressure on military leaders to be lenient and, thus, subvert the military's formal instruments, laid down procedures and professional standards. by resorting to informal sanctioning regimes.

To conclude, the Ghana Armed Forces presents the ideal case to understand how hybrid security governance structure functions. Through its hierarchical logic of, among others, seniority, ranking and appointments, and also through norms and values, the Ghanaian military shows how formalised instruments and informal norms co-exist. In the hybrid security governance of the GAF, the formalised instruments and informal norms that inform the governance structure complement each other. Hence, moving forward, other cases could learn from the Ghanaian example.

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