

Turkish Professional Military Education and Civilian Control

Mustafa Uluçakar**
Ali Çağlar****

Abstract

This study aims to examine whether or not the Turkish professional military education is consistent with the necessities of objective civilian control, which is deemed as the prerequisite for political control in democracies. Objective civilian control is an approach premised on separate institutional role for the political and the military leaders. This mode of political control is the crux of the current civil-military paradigm developed by Huntington and, it is the cornerstone of Western thinking with regard to democratic control of armed forces. The study concludes that there is a need to make certain revisions in the Turkish professional military education to respond to the need for objective civilian control and contemporary forms of democratic civilian control.

Keywords

Professional military education, democratic control of the armed forces, objective civilian control.

* Dr., Part-time Lecturer, Hacettepe University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, - Ankara/Turkey
mulucakar@gmail.com

** Prof. Dr., Hacettepe University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Political Science and Public Administration - Ankara/Turkey
acaglar@hacettepe.edu.tr (Corresponding Author).

Introduction

This study aims to examine whether or not the Turkish professional military education is consistent with the requirements for objective civilian control, which is deemed as being the prerequisite for political control in democracies. To achieve this aim, the study begins, after a methodological explanation, by outlining existing theoretical and practical discussions regarding the effect of professional military education on the democratization process in general, and on Turkish military education in particular. Then, a brief history of professional military education in Turkey is provided. Additionally, findings extracted from interviews and individual internal observations as to whether the Turkish professional military education is consistent with the requirements for objective civilian control or not, a specific portion of the overall argument is outlined.

Civilian control—military subordination to the political rule—is the fundamental principle of contemporary forms of civil-military relations, and the prerequisite for a functional democracy. As described by Huntington (1993) in his work titled *The Soldier and the State*, the most appropriate mode of political control in democracies is “objective civilian control”. Under the premise of objective civilian control, Huntington (1996) treats politics and military service as two different and unbounded areas of expertise. According to this reasoning, officers who have received an inadequate education in politics should not involve themselves in this realm. For the same reason, politicians should avoid addressing issues that require military expertise.

Bruneau and Tollefson (2009: 237) argue that a professional military education that shapes officers’ beliefs and norms regarding the military’s roles and functions in relation to the elected political authority is important, particularly for states in transition to democracy. Wick (2000: v) asserts that the Turkish officer corps regards itself as the guardian of the ideology of Kemalism, named after Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey. Rather than focusing exclusively on national defense, military officers are indoctrinated in, and become occupied with, the preservation of Kemalism against internal threats such as political Islam and Kurdish separatism. He also argues that Turkey’s participation in NATO and the military

assistance she has received from the United States over the course of almost 60 years are key factors that have contributed to the modernization and professionalization of the Turkish military structure. Wick notes that the Turkish officer corps has developed into a highly professional body with a high degree of autonomy, through professional military education. Nevertheless, and contrary to Huntington's (1993) proposition that maximizing military professionalism leads to objective civilian control of the military, the Turkish corps has not been under civilian control, and has continued to play a major role in domestic politics (Wick, 2000: v). On the other hand, military professionalism is a relative concept, which makes different senses in different cases. Furthermore, the development of military professionalism may take time. Thus, it can also be argued that the professionalism brought to the Turkish military—especially during the EU integration process—has led to a significant decrease in the military's political influence.

The existence of various interpretations in relation to the definition of “military professionalism” and the controversial arguments regarding the role of professional military education sets the rationale for further elaboration on the research question. To provide an effective answer to the research question, it is necessary to examine how professional military education shapes officers' beliefs and norms regarding the military's roles and functions in relation to the elected political authority. It necessitates having information about the Turkish military education system, with particular reference to its curricula and ideological content. However, there are few empirical analyses directly related to the research question.¹ Moreover, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) is generally secretive, and do not support academics interested in studying the dynamics of civil-military relations in Turkey, because of the fact that the “Turkish Military Penal Code” prohibits military officials from providing information to anyone except authorized departments for any purpose. Hence, to obtain the data needed, a qualitative research method is used in this study. In other words, in addition to the literature review, most of the data were collected through interviews of personnel with military backgrounds. A fairly small but focused sample (17 in total) was selected. The interviews were designed to include retired military officers who had served in high-level command

posts, academics who have military backgrounds, and scholars who have been discharged from the TAF due to their alleged illegal left, right, radical, religious, or reactionary views, in the aftermath of military interventions. Within this context, 10 retired generals and colonels, 4 academics with military backgrounds, and 3 scholars discharged from the military due to their alleged illegal political views after the 1980 and 1997 coups were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews² were conducted in places selected by the interviewees.

Theoretical and Historical Background

According to Huntington (1996), a professionalized military will voluntarily stay out of politics. Contrary to Huntington's premise, Janowitz (1971: 439) asserts that it is impossible to isolate professional soldiers from domestic political life, and it is undesirable to leave the tasks of political education exclusively to professionals, despite their high levels of responsibility in such assignments. For Janowitz, societal control is the only way to frame civilian control and make it meaningful, and the primary objective of civil control should be to integrate the military into the social structure and ethos.

Turan (1977: 33) states that political culture has two basic functions with regard to the political process. The first is to ease the functioning of the political process by standardizing some patterns related to beliefs and behaviors. The second is to provide recognition, legitimacy, and continuity for the political system. According to Huntington and Jorge (1995), the political culture of a society is the total of its members' values and attitudes with regard to political objects, as well as their beliefs and convictions about political symbols. A network of interrelationships exists amongst political cultures, political organizations, political systems, and the citizenry. While political organizations reflect the political culture, political systems are shaped according to the qualities and effectiveness of the political organizations.

Pion-Berlin (1992) classifies the domains in which the military involves politics into three categories: entirely military domains, entirely political domains, and gray domains (which require the involvement of both).

Entirely military domains include the development of forces, modernization, doctrine, military education and training, as well as decisions to conduct operations at the tactical and operative levels. Entirely political domains comprise risk and threat evaluations, intelligence, psychological operations, and decisions about internal threats. Gray domains include defence planning, the production/procurement of armaments and equipment, defence budgeting, and decisions to conduct operations at the strategic level. According to this classification, professional military education falls entirely into the military domain. Similarly, Huntington (1993), the founder of the classic liberal paradigm, views military education as a process requiring special expertise. From the premise of objective civilian control, Huntington proposes that it would be adequate to allocate institutional authority to the armed forces in terms of regulating military education. According to Huntington (1993: 19), “professionalism and military education are inevitably the most prominent organizational specifications of modern armies.... The level of professionalism and military training makes modern armies different from their older samples”.

Armed forces are organized structures designed for armed violence. This requires officers to be competent when conducting tasks such as organizing a structure capable of using armed violence, equipping it, and preparing it to fight, as well as planning operations and leading troops at the tactical level. Officers who are subjected to such a wide-ranging education accordingly acquire the intellectual acumen needed to follow and evaluate social and political processes, in addition to the ability to lead troops at the tactical level. Such an education also equips officers to decide, act, lead, and survive under risky circumstances. This is accomplished by undertaking training aimed at professionalization, which requires the ability to perform difficult tasks (e.g., the execution of tactical operations).

Professional military education consists of processes designed to encourage learning and/or acting without question. Therefore, such processes could, be expected to produce officers with similar thoughts and a group consciousness forged through the development of a similar sense of responsibility. Another notable aspect of military education involves the admission of cadets at very early ages.

One of the main objectives of professional military education is to teach officers to use their knowledge and abilities for the sake of society. In other words, a professional military education endows officers with a specific sense of social responsibility, which is reinforced by a sense of safeguarding. These characteristics of a professional military education lead officers to view themselves as distinct from, or even more qualified than, the other segments of society, including politicians. As argued by Kamrava (2005), the use of high-tech weaponry/equipment, precise planning, effective strike capabilities, and well-designed conscription and promotion systems characterize military professionalization. The perfection of such qualities develops the ability of armies to become involved in politics. He further claims that such capabilities encourage armies to develop corporatist identities, as have been observed in Israel, Egypt, and Turkey.³

The professionalization of the military obviously requires a high level of expertise, which in turn requires a well-rounded education. A professional military education thus contributes to the development of abilities unique to the military, in addition to cultivating the general intellectual level needed to understand the world. Professional military education also promotes group consensus by cultivating expertise, and a mutual sense of responsibility.

According to Serra's (2011: 38) remark, as quoted in Augeora (1995: 33), "the process of democratic control necessitates two different missions: The first is to keep the army out of politics. The second is to make the possible objections of [the] military to political authority out of [the] question. It is meaningless to detach these two levels from the perspective of availability or possibility of military intervention". As observed by Linz (1978: 18), "democratic legitimacy is dependent on the belief that no other regime can achieve better for collective purposes, at any point of time in a specific country". Soldiers can legitimize government policies to the extent that they comply with their perceptions of democracy. Serra (2011: 42) also states that soldiers are most likely to be prepared to adopt the changes brought about by such authority—including changes to basic principles that are considered unchangeable—if they perceive the political authority as a legitimate institution in the democratic sense.

The strong impact of the military in Turkish society is rooted in the history of earlier Turkish states, including the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the military has traditionally been seen as the primary agent of modernization since the late eighteenth century.⁴ According to Berkes (1978: 191), “We cannot understand the mechanism of the Turkish modernization without taking into account the Military Academy and its graduates”. The poor performance and frequent defeats of the Ottoman military formed a primary reason for seeking reforms in the apparatus of the state. From the early eighteenth century, the Ottoman Army came to be dominated by Western states, which were keeping abreast of improvements in science and technology, and using them to improve their armed forces. Military failures have been identified as the primary cause of the fall of the Ottoman Empire. For this reason, Sultan Selim III started a program aimed at modernizing the armed forces and enabling them to cope with Western armies. In line with this program, *Tersane Hendesehanesi*, the first military school, was founded in 1773, during the reign of Sultan Mustafa III. This institution would become the archetype for the current Naval Military Academy (Kuran, 2012: 14–27).

The social composition of the Guild of Janissaries, the professional core of the Ottoman Army, changed in parallel with the conscription of Turks and Muslims, due to the erosion of the system of *devshirmeh*,⁵ and the shift from competency evaluation towards patronage. In line with these changes, the Guild of Janissaries became a political power capable of ousting first grand viziers, and then sultans, through military interventions. The abrogation of the Guild of Janissaries,⁶ which had become an increasing threat to the sovereignty of the political regime, was the first comprehensive civil-military regulation aimed at reinforcing the authority of sultans against the military.

To train infantry and cavalry officers, *Mekteb-i Fünun-ı Harbiye-i Şahane*, which originated from the Prussian military training system, was founded in 1834. In the same year, *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Askerîye-i Şahane* was founded to train military medical doctors, pharmacists, and veterinarians. According to Findley (1996: 212–22), the Ottoman state had no interest in following the scientific developments that were occurring in Europe, and it did not demand any improvements in education. He attributes this to a superiority

complex supported by Islamic perceptions. Sharia,⁷ which separates Muslims from the others (i.e., *darül-harp* and *darül-Islam*), sharpened the division between the Ottomans and the West. Moreover, according to Göçek (1999: 34–35), given the prevalent Islamic notion that “Muslims imitating Christians become one of them,” led to any effort to copy European practices being labeled as “stinking with blasphemy” and a “betrayal of Islam”. İnalçık (1964) uses the words of the Prophet Mohammed⁸ to explain the use of Western education in Ottoman military schools. According to İnalçık, this Hadith provided a legal foundation for the Ottoman army’s adoption of Western war practices, including military education and training systems. In contrast, Başgöz (1995: 14–34) argues that the introduction of Western military practices was facilitated by the Ottoman legal system, which stipulates certain exemptions from the Sharia in specific cases. According to Başgöz, although Turks adopted Sharia upon accepting the tenets of Islam, the *Hukuk-i Örfî* (i.e., moral laws that are not openly anomalous to Islam),⁹ remained valid along with Sharia. Military education in the late Ottoman period also contributed to the collective intellect by training officers who were not only equipped with the knowledge and capabilities for fighting in wars, but who could also engage in various professional endeavors (e.g., engineering, pharmaceuticals, veterinary services, and medicine). After 1834, military education conducted under the supervision of European officers, physicians, and engineers ushered in a new generation that was much better equipped with contemporary techniques than had been the case in the past.

Territorial losses in the Balkans and perpetual immigration from that region inspired this new generation of officers to seek solutions to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, thus leading them into the realm of politics. The first political protest in Istanbul was organized by cadets in the late 1880s, and the *Osmanlı İttihad Cemiyeti* (Ottoman Union Committee), which was founded by cadets of the Imperial Medical School in 1889. It would later become the *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (political movement/Party for Union and Progress) (Sorgun, 2003: 7–9). Military officers from this committee ousted Abdülhamid’s regime in the early twentieth century. Resneli Niyazi¹⁰ states, “young officers became the praetorian guards and kingmakers” (Resneli, 1910: 186).

Hale (2011: 195) writes that, “Atatürk’s government sought to use the army as an instrument of education, social mobilization and ‘nation building’”. Contrary to Hale’s view, Uyar and Varoğlu (2008: 192) wrote that, “the general attitude towards officer training changed after the First World War. It was transformed into a two-year program focusing on purely technical matters with immediate military application in the field. This was consistent with the efforts of the political leadership to distance the military from politics”. Sarıgil (2014: 176) also states that, “succumbing to a charismatic political leadership, the military refrained from acting autonomously within the political system, operating instead as an instrument of the political leadership”.

Wick (2000: v) commented that, “Turkey’s participation in NATO and the military assistance it received from the United States became key factors contributing to the modernization and professionalization of the armed forces”. Varoğlu¹¹ also said that, “the United States had a profound effect on Turkish professional military education between 1950 and 1970”. Both the economic posture—created largely by foreign assistance—and Turkey’s membership in NATO changed the expectations for professional military education. The conservative approach of downgrading professional military education to tactical-level training prevailed until 1969, when a three-year semi-academic curriculum was put into effect. The most substantial change was the addition of sociology, psychology, and leadership under the title of “Behavioral Sciences”. After the 1970s, however, dazzling changes began to take place in the Turkish system of military education. The most prominent of these changes was the emergence of cadets with socialist tendencies. Commanding authorities took harsh measures to suppress them. Another significant development during that period was to increase the duration of education in military academies to four years. The program was based on the vision that “an officer is a product of various sciences, and must be cultured, multi-faceted, and a real intellectual”. In a sense, the aim was to create a tutoring block by using the capacity of cadets with intellectual capabilities. However, those changes became one of the catalysts for the emergence of socialist views. It then resulted in the refinement or, more accurately, a kind of purging or cleansing, of those with leftist tendencies. Almost no regulation remained in effect in the curricula of the military

academies for more than 10 years in the period between 1970 and 2000. For example, the percentage of social sciences increased up to 80% and then decreased to 15%, due to prospects and thoughts related to observations of the erosion of military qualifications because of the lack of military classes. The same sort of fluctuation occurred in almost every decade. Towards the 1990s, a different mindset began to emerge. Diversity in the officer corps was pursued, by sending some of the cadets to American military academies, including West Point Military Academy (for officer candidates), basic and advanced branch schools (to prepare for command posts), and the Naval Post-Graduate School (for MA and PhD programs).

Findings and Discussions

The main objective of the Turkish professional education system is to have highly qualified officers ready for combat duties, with a high sense of duty and absolute obedience. It also aims to have them equipped with contemporary knowledge and skills, as well as great physical and moral strength. Furthermore, as part of the Turkish national education system, it is designed to instill the officers with national and humanitarian values, as well as professional qualifications. Officers are supposed to maintain these qualifications in light of the philosophy of “lifelong education”.

The Turkish officer corps’ professional education system is made up of two layers: The secondary school system (military high schools) and the higher education system (military academies and war colleges). Education in the military high school is equivalent to Anatolian high schools, subordinated to the Ministry of National Education, which has a four-year curriculum that includes preparation classes. Course schedules—with the addition of elective courses consistent with the configuration and technical needs of the force—are ratified by the Ministry of National Education. Elective courses include technical classes such as seamanship, astronomy, space sciences, and the introduction to aviation, as well as courses aimed at increasing social and emotional awareness that include information and communication technologies, democracy and human rights, psychology and logic.

The course schedules of military academies are designed according to the Law on Higher Education to cover the needs of the TAF. In other words,

military academies implement four-year undergraduate programs consistent with the standards of the Council of Higher Education. Within this context, the academic units of the Armed Forces Academy offer programs in system engineering, electronic engineering, construction engineering, mechanical engineering, business administration, and public administration. The Navy Academy has departments of industrial engineering, naval architecture, marine engineering, computer engineering, and electronic engineering. The Air Force Academy has departments of aviation engineering, electronic engineering, industrial engineering, and computer engineering. Gendarme officers are educated in the Armed Forces Academy. Coast guard officers are educated in the Naval Academy. In addition to the programs and courses that parallel the system of the Council of Higher Education, academies train officers for modern tactical situations that they will face later as new platoon leaders. There are also physical programs, which include physical education classes, physical fitness testing, and competitive athletics. Cadets undergo field training in summer in different camps, where they train in more advanced field crafts and military skills. In addition to the above-mentioned programs, each academy offers postgraduate and doctoral programs, which is open also to the civil university graduates.

War colleges require two years of a postgraduate program for lieutenants and captains on active duty that leads to a certificate of equivalence accredited by the Council of Higher Education. War colleges' programs are intended to promote officers to assume staff duties and command posts. Officers and petty officers can take part in postgraduate and/or doctoral programs at universities both in Turkey and abroad, either on their own behalf or on behalf of the TAF. In sum, institutes of the Turkish professional military education system ratified and accredited by authorized departments of the Ministry of National Education. Course schedules are equivalent to the Anatolian high schools for secondary education and, roughly equivalent to the same departments of civilian universities for the military academies, except for the addition of elective, tactical/technical courses, military training, and physical programs.

Demirel (2010: 14–15) considers military education as a prominent source of military interventions.¹² According to Karpat (2010: 312), perceptions of

high-ranking officers would be key aspects of Turkish civil-military relations, and prompt tendencies towards military interventions. Thompson (1972: 36–38) also emphasizes the perceptions of officers, listing four elements that provoke military interventions. The first involves the vulnerability of the political system and lack of authority. The second relates to the officers' perceptions of themselves as guardians of the state. The third refers to the perceptions that officers hold with regard to internal and domestic politics, and the fourth consists of their perceptions of grievance. Örs (1996: 39) advances these elements (e.g., solidarity and group consciousness), and classifies them as typical characteristics of military organizations that advance the military to the level of the most powerful organizations in a physical sense, in addition to elevating it above other organizations in a social sense. According to Örs (1996: 39), “dissatisfaction by being combined with psychology driven by group consciousness may trigger tendencies toward military intervention”.

Most of the interviewees agree that there is a close connection between military education and civil-military relations. The importance of military education in terms of having stable civil-military relations and politically controlling the military was expressed as “self-evident”. For example, Akkaya¹³ agreed that military education is an important element in achieving objective civilian control, and that it can produce officers with similar thought patterns. Nevertheless, as reflected in the following remarks, he strongly rejected the notion that it produces officers with pro-coup thought patterns:

It may be true that military education has an aspect of indoctrination, which creates distrust against civilians. In fact, military education tries to impose the idea of the “eternity of the state,” in which beliefs and values such as devotion to the state, loyalty to the heritage of Mustafa Kemal—eternal leader, as declared by the state—and the instinct to protect these values in any way necessary are embedded. However, they are not singly sufficient to explain any “tradition of coup d'état,” and it is almost impossible to assert that military education is the main reason for training officers with pro-coup tendencies.

Contrary to Akkaya's argument, Yıldırım¹⁴ stated that all modernization processes have resulted in the emergence of a new generation of officers, who were discordant with the political system and its executive authorities. In other words, the renewed educational system of military academies opened the door for the officers to become involved in politics. He continued his explanation as follows:

Almost all modernization efforts in the military education system, taking place later than the 19th century, similarly resulted in training of officers who were politically discordant to the political authority. For example, the new generation of officers included the founders and core elements of *İttihat ve Terakki* (political movement for union and progress), which was the first organized petty bourgeois political movement in [the] late Ottoman period. Similarly, the duration of the education in war academies was established at three years in 1969 and extended to four years in 1978, in accordance with the plan prepared by [the] Education and Schools Department of Army led by General Kenan Evren. This was quite similar to the regulations adopted in [the] late Ottoman era. In a sense, like the officers who were trained with an ethos that was far from the statist and whose views thus questioned the legitimacy of the political authority of the time, cadets commissioned in war schools after 1974 developed similar sets of values, which led them to be discordant with political authorities. In particular, the socialist popularization that started in [the] 1970s affected [the] military. Furthermore, socialist movements became committed to violent acts due to pressure and provocation from the state. It had a profound effect on cadets as well. In the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, around 1000 of them were interrogated, tortured and discharged from [the] military.

Regarding to the question related to indoctrination, most of the interviewees argued that there is a kind of indoctrination. However, it is definitely intended to fortify discipline and obedience within a certain hierarchal structure, and to form certain sets of values required for national unity and integrity. Akyaz's¹⁵ comments, in the interview, regarding this case were as follows:

As a person with a long history of service in military schools, I have never seen any malignant indoctrination [with] even the slightest implication in the curricula that would denigrate or negate democracy. It seems that the reason behind that sort of recent analyses, tending to see the issue from the perspective of recent changes, is the observations related to the portrait of the military elites of the early 2000s. For example, Demirel tried to look at the cases in which the political settings of the 21st century changed the mindset of high-ranking officers. If you look at the phenomena from that narrowed perspective, it would be hard to deny the fact that the political setting, particularly in light of the changes stemming from the EU harmonization process, changed the perception of the officers. However, it is a relatively weak argument for inferring the dynamics and the tools of transformation, which are important in explaining the military interventions. Both allegations—“Turkish professional military education is the most important dynamic of coups,” and, “it prevents officers from digesting democracy,”—seem to be far-fetched explanations.

On the other hand, Çağlayan¹⁶ alleged that the main purpose of both military and national education systems is to train individuals accordingly with the authorized national ideology. According to Çağlayan, in addition to the education system, the legal framework played an important role in establishing and perpetuating the system of guardianship. Specific features of the laws and regulations of the new education system, whose structure permitted modifications compatible with the new circumstances, preserved the sense of guardianship. Concrete evidence exists to suggest that officers exercising their religious duties are forced into a humiliating circle in which they are described as “peasants,” “religionists,” or “fundamentalists”.

Many times during the interview, Çağlayan recapitulated that all these codes and mechanisms were tools for fortifying guardianship. Nevertheless, he also noted, “it would be difficult to imagine that the officer corps could develop into a politically monolithic structure through all those codes and mechanisms”. According to him, “this might only be true for the high-ranking officers, however, due to their passion for being in high-command

posts”. Contrary to his views, according to Varoğlu, “it is also highly difficult to say that guardianship tendencies are likely to increase in the higher ranks, because the fundamentals of strict hierarchical structure do not merely allow superiors to lead subordinates. They also force them to obey the precepts”.

Regarding the third question related to the issue of “obedience”, comments by Yıldırım reflected the consideration that military education may serve to cultivate stable civil-military relations by forming a sort of intense sense of obedience:

Cadets are first equipped with patterns of thought and behavior that require compliance to orders without questioning. As is commonly known, or at least presumed, the Turkish armed forces are amongst the most disciplined military forces in the world. Moreover, it is possible to add one more basic pattern, which can be interrelated with religious teachings, namely, “everything must be done with the guidance of elder and/or masters/preceptors”. The most indoctrinated notion in military education is “obedience”. It is hard to imagine that officers equipped with such patterns could maintain their jobs by aiming to displace political authority. The pre-eminent reason behind this is the ruling characteristic of the military education, which involves teaching cadets to do their ordained jobs first. Contrary to popular belief, in my opinion, discipline is an important dynamic in terms of precluding coups. The only coup to take place outside of the chain of command was the one in 1960. Even in that coup, the small group of junior officers who established the core of action did not act without the orders of three generals, although some of them had not joined the plot until the very last moment. This in itself is quite enough to show the role of discipline and obedience.

According to Demirel (2010: 14–15), Turkish officers have the conviction that they are more qualified and privileged than civilians. Such privilege entails serving the nation by working hard and making whatever sacrifices may be necessary, and may even include facing death. Such convictions of officers may offer a possible explanation for the appearance of so many

legally debated demands for action on the political agenda since 2002. As to the question related to the actual or perceived imbalance between military and civilian capabilities, Varoğlu commented that, “the main purpose of military education is to train officers who are unquestionably obedient to basic principles, while also being equal to or better (if possible) than the civilians in terms of their qualifications”. He highlighted the internal discrepancy of this stated purpose by saying, “If you aim to train officers with absolute intellectual capacity, it would be hard to expect them to be non-questioning individuals. This dilemma has forced the authorities to change the system almost every 10 years”. Çağlayan also stated that the confined hierarchal system established by military education “makes officers think that they are more qualified, not only than their juniors but also than all civil servants. This sense of superiority is created and reinforced by common cultural and religious codes”.

Another significant finding of the interviews in relation to the imbalance between military and civilian capability comes with regard to officers’ perceptions of politicians. Almost all the interviewees—notwithstanding any specific question—expressed that they had been strictly indoctrinated to stay out of politics, as expressed in a prominent motto of military education: “being above politics”. They also said that they had been afraid of being involved in politics, not only because of this type of indoctrination, but also because of the strict stipulation of the military code that prohibited their involvement. Moreover, most tried to explain the reasoning behind the visible discrepancy between discourse and practice regarding the military’s involvement in politics with a common perception of politics as a sort of “dirty business,” and of politicians as, “persons fighting solely to possess and conserve power through consulting tricks and intrigues”. Safi (2005: 126) defines this skeptical manner and social remoteness as a “typically conservative characteristic”. In his opinion, the code dominating the attitudes concerning the discriminating and consolidating aspects of politics is citizens’ perceptions of politicians. They see the politicians as “vote hunters”. Another reason that apparently led officers to have negative perceptions of politics and politicians involved their value judgments, which treated politics as a slow-moving affiliation, and politicians as caring about balance purely for the sake of increasing their numbers of votes.

Conclusion

Given the information provided by authorized departments for the Turkish professional, the military education system seems to aim at training officers to have the following qualifications: the ability to grasp technological developments, and proficiency in the use of sophisticated weapons and command and control systems. The curricula and program objectives appear to be consistent with national and international norms and standards, as well as with the requirements for objective civilian control. Furthermore, authorized departments of the Turkish General Staff strictly reject allegations that “professional military education is a tool to shape the beliefs and norms, contrary to the democratic norms and principals, regarding the military’s roles and functions in relation to the elected political authority”.¹⁷

Most of the interviewees agreed that the system can produce officers with similar thought patterns, but they strongly rejected the notion that it produces officers with pro-coup tendencies. They also concluded that the curricula and program objectives are consistent with the requirements for objective civilian control. This conclusion, however, seems to be premised on the lack of significant differences between the curricula of non-military and military schools, with the exception of the addition of elective, tactical/technical courses, military training, and physical programs. Nevertheless, cadets enter military secondary schools at the age of 14, where they stay until the age of 22, in a free-of-charge, boarding-school style of education. Almost all the instructors within the military education system are schoolmasters who were raised in the military. Living in a closed-cycle control system as cadets, and later as officers, may cultivate a culture that differs from the one prevailing in society. Furthermore, the Turkish military has many other tools, interrelated with education that it can use to influence societal perceptions and the officers, as a part of society. Examples include the conscription system, national security classes in secondary education curricula, humanitarian assistance, medical evacuations, search and rescue missions, disaster prevention, and contributions to public health, transportation, environmental awareness, and family planning, etc.

The Turkish professional military education is definitely intended to fortify discipline and obedience within a certain hierarchal structure, and to form the values that were required for national unity and integrity. Interviewees agreed that such a confined system, reinforced by common cultural and religious codes, encourages officers to think that they are more qualified not only than their juniors, but that they are also more qualified than all civil servants, and this may lead them to have negative perceptions of politics and politicians. However, most of the interviewees rejected the idea that discipline/obedience in itself would not play a role in triggering tendencies to displace elected governments. On the contrary, they think that organizations characterized by a strict sense of obedience can have positive effects on the democratic control of the armed forces. Military education may therefore be one of the most important tools for re-structuring officers' sense of obedience and eliminating any objections they may have to political authority. In this respect, it is also important to form their framework of obedience according to a professional ethos, as is the case in Western militaries, instead of according to their own class of cultural patterns.

All in all, despite the various thoughts advanced by the interviewees with regard to the relationship between a professional military education and objective civilian control, a consensus appeared to emerge concerning the need to regulate a professional military education to ensure it was consistent with the requirements for democratic control. This will continue to be an urgent need well into the future, as Turkey continues its efforts to achieve further and greater democratization. Çelik's¹⁸ statements regarding civil-military relations provide a clear indication that the political authority is also considering making changes not only in professional military education, but also in some elements of the national education system, such as national security courses taught by retired military officers within the curricula of non-military secondary schools.

The form of civil-military relations in Turkey is indisputably undergoing change, particularly in response to the impetus provided by the European Union (EU) Harmonization Process. The findings of this study also indicate

that specific notions that characterize the Turkish military (e.g., the central role of homage, junior-senior relations, and the form of obedience) are changing. Taking and preserving initiative, boosting morale, possessing the abilities required by new challenges, interoperability, cohesion, and similar specifications are gradually gaining ground. New regulations concerning conscription, the military education system, and conscientious objection may also be possible. Such revisions would create new sets of values and rituals for the armed forces, depending upon changes in the composition of troops and training systems. As such, they would most likely affect—and probably change—the nature of democratic control.

Within the context of regulating the Turkish professional military education, most of the interviewees stated that a board organized by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) that involved broad participation should review the formation of professional military education. The most common suggestions for achieving the necessary changes are to reconsider the secondary school system (military high schools) and to establish a mixed teaching staff instead of relying entirely on military instructors, and especially so for the courses that do not require technical military expertise. With these comments in mind, they also suggested closing some of the present military education institutions that are not absolutely necessary for military missions.¹⁹ Changing the starting age for cadets would definitely allow cadets to make independent decisions, and thus be somewhat removed from political and ideological indoctrination. Establishing a mixed teaching staff and more collaboration with civilians would help the cadets have values comparable to those of their civilian peers.

Additionally, it is suggested that the number of social-science courses—particularly sociology and philosophy—in the curricula of military academies, the level of collaboration with other universities—including student exchange programs—and the number of research institutes and female cadets should be increased.

Endnotes

- ¹ Literatures directly related to the research question are as follows: Akşit B., S. Kalaycıoğlu, K. Varoğlu and M. Çakar. (2007), “A Comparison of Civil–Military Attitudes: The Case of Turkey, in Giuseppe Caforio” (ed.) *Cultural Differences Between The Military and Parent Society in Democratic Countries* (Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development, Volume 4) Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp.319 – 325; Uyar, M. and A. K. Varoğlu. (2008), “In Search of Modernity and Rationality: The Evolution of Turkish Military Academy Curricula in a Historical Perspective”, *Armed Forces & Society*, 2008, 35: 180; Varoğlu, A. K. and A. Bicaksiz. (2005), “Volunteering for risk: The Culture of Turkish Armed Forces”, in *Armed Forces & Society* 31, 4 (Summer 2005): 583–98 and Akyaz, D. (2002), “*Askerî müdahalelerin orduya etkisi: Hiyerarşi dışı örgütlenmeden emir komuta zincirine*”, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları.
- ² The questions asked of interviewees were: 1) “Has professional military education in Turkey accounted for military interventions in politics in the past?” 2) “Is there sociopolitical and/or ideological indoctrination in professional military education?” 3) “Is there an actual or perceived imbalance between military and civilian capabilities?” 4) “What is the main aim of creating an intense sense of obedience and how does it function?” 5) “Is there a need to make certain revisions in professional military education to respond to the needs of contemporary forms of democratic control?” 6) “Is there anything you want to add?” Data collection was initiated in the first half of 2013, and it took more than one year to complete the interviews.
- ³ He uses the Jewish Army, which has many of those qualities, as an example. Furthermore, he describes Israel as a “military democracy” and/or “an army who has a state”.
- ⁴ For a further discussion on the cultural aspects of the Turkish military see M. Uyar and A. K. Varoğlu, “In Search of Modernity and Rationality: The Evolution of Turkish Military Academy Curricula in a Historical Perspective”, *Armed Forces & Society* 35 (2008): 180. See also, A. Varoğlu and A. Bicaksiz, “Volunteering for Risk: The Culture of Turkish Armed Forces”, *Armed Forces & Society* 31 no. 4 (2005): 583–98.
- ⁵ Non-Muslim kids, mostly Christian, conscripted to be brought up for the janissaries.
- ⁶ Called “Vaka-i Hayriye,” which means propitious event.
- ⁷ A legal system based on the religious codes of Islam.

- 8 It is licit to use their tactics and weapons when warring with infidels.
- 9 Unwritten codes stemming from generally accepted customs and traditions.
- 10 Resneli Niyazi is a military officer and prominent member of İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti.
- 11 He is a retired colonel who has the degree of professor, and served in military schools for more than 30 years. His observations are mostly used to summarize the history of Turkish professional military education with respect to the period between 1950 and 2000.
- 12 Authorized information channels of the Turkish General Staff denied such allegations in a press release through its website on July 23, 2012.
- 13 He is a retired army colonel and a PhD candidate in International Relations Department in the Institute of Social Sciences, Middle East Technical University.
- 14 An ex-lieutenant, author, journalist, and academic forced into obligatory retirement after the 1980 coup due to his Marxist views. He is also the author of books on political sciences.
- 15 He is a retired army colonel who holds the position of associate professor, and who served in the military schools for a long period as an instructor. He is currently working as a legal adviser and giving lectures on Turkish political history at the university.
- 16 An ex-major, lawyer, and author. He is working as a legal advisor and the vice president of a non-governmental organization. He is also the author of political science books.
- 17 For further information see; a press release by the Turkish General Staff dated May 7, 2012. <http://www.gazetevatan.com/tsk-da-darbe-egitimi-verilmiyor-448429-gundem/> (Accessed January 7, 2014.)
- 18 He is the vice president and spokesperson for the Justice and Development Party, and the chairperson responsible for the party's media and publicity.
- 19 For example, vocational health school attached to the Gülhane Military Medical Faculty, which is aiming to raise non-commissioned officers and some departments of the Gülhane Military Medical Faculty, which are not absolutely necessary for combat service support duties and field operations.

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Türkiye’de Profesyonel Askerî Eğitim ve Sivil Kontrol

Mustafa Uluçakar*

Ali Çağlar**

Öz

Bu çalışma, Türk profesyonel askerî eğitimin, demokrasilerde siyasî kontrolün ön koşulu olarak kabul edilen objektif sivil kontrol ile uyumlu olup olmadığını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Objektif sivil kontrol siyasî ve askeri liderlerin farklı kurumsal roller üstlenmesini öngörür. Bu siyasî kontrol yöntemi, Huntington tarafından geliştirilen hali hazırda geçerli sivil-asker ilişkileri paradigmasının özünü ve aynı zamanda silahlı kuvvetlerin demokratik kontrolü ile ilgili Batı düşüncesinin temelini oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmada, Türk profesyonel askerî eğitiminde, objektif sivil kontrolün ve çağdaş demokratik sivil kontrolün gereklerine yanıt verecek belirli değişiklikler yapmak gerektiği sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Profesyonel askerî eğitim, silahlı kuvvetlerin demokratik kontrolü, objektif sivil kontrol

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- * Dr., Yarı Zamanlı Öğretim Üyesi, Hacettepe Üniversitesi, İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü, - Ankara/Türkiye
mulucakar@gmail.com
- ** Prof. Dr., Hacettepe Üniversitesi, İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü – Ankara/Türkiye
acaglar@hacettepe.edu.tr (Sorumlu Yazar)

Профессиональное Военное Образование и Гражданский Контроль в Турции

Мустафа Улучакар*

Али Чалар**

Аннотация

Данная работа направлена на изучение вопроса согласования Туркской профессиональной военной образовании с потребностями объективного гражданского контроля, который считается необходимым условием для политического контроля. Объективный гражданский контроль предусматривает принимать различные институциональные роли политических и военных руководителей. Этот режим политического контроля является сутью нынешнего военно-гражданской парадигмы, разработанной Хантингтона и, он также является краеугольным камнем западного мышления в отношении демократического контроля над вооруженными силами. В исследовании делается вывод, что необходимо внести определенные изменения в Турецком профессиональном военном образовании, чтобы ответить на необходимость объективного гражданского контроля и современных форм демократического гражданского контроля.

Ключевые слова

Профессиональное военное образование, демократический контроль над вооруженными силами, Объективный гражданский контроль

* Док., Преподаватель полставки, университет Хажеттепе, факультет политологии и государственного управления - Анкара / Турция
mulucakar@gmail.com

** Проф. док., университет Хажеттепе, факультет политологии и государственного управления - Анкара / Турция
acaglar@hacettepe.edu.tr (Соответствующий автор)