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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND THE CASE OF THE 1960 COUP IN TURKEY

Abstract

This study examines the historically and structurally multilayered nature of civil-military relations in Turkey through a theoretical analysis centered on the May 27, 1960 military coup. Five major theories that stand out in the literature -Huntington's Institutional Distinction Theory, Janowitz's Professional Soldier Theory, Schiff's Concordance Theory, Feaver's Agency Theory, and Bland's Shared Responsibility Theory- are first analyzed theoretically, and then their explanatory capacity in the Turkish context is evaluated. Each theory analyzes civil-military relations through a distinct conceptual framework based on the legitimacy of political authority, military loyalty, institutional control mechanisms, and cultural/social cohesion. However, in a country like Turkey—where the military bureaucracy has played not only a technical but also an ideological role, where modernization occurred late, and where secularization was implemented top-down—these theories fall short of providing comprehensive explanations. This limitation stems from the fact that most of these theories are built upon the conditions of consolidated Western democracies. The article critically discusses how these theories function in explaining developments in the Turkish context by examining the practices of the Democrat Party (DP) government prior to the 1960 coup, unrest within the military, and the deepening of societal polarization. Feaver's concepts of "shirking" and "monitoring" are employed to explain events





ranging from the coup proposal made to İnönü to the DP's mechanisms of military oversight. Schiff's emphasis on institutional concordance is used to illustrate how the consensus among the military, civilian elites, and the public was gradually undermined. Janowitz's focus on civil-societal integration sheds light on the sociological dynamics behind the military's perception of the DP's religiously oriented policies as a threat. By demonstrating the inadequacies of these theoretical frameworks in the Turkish case, the study argues that understanding civil-military relations requires not only a focus on institutional arrangements and legal frameworks but also attention to historical identities, ideological cleavages, and the cultural codes through which society perceives military actors. The study concludes that establishing sustainable and democratic civil-military relations in Turkey depends not only on constitutional arrangements, but also on building institutional trust, fostering a sense of mutual responsibility, and legitimizing military reforms in the eyes of the public—all of which require a multidimensional approach.

Keywords: Civil-Military Relations, 1960 Military Coup, Institutional Control, Professionalism and Loyalty, Concordance and Political Legitimacy.

SİVİL-ASKER İLİŞKİLERİNİN KURAMSAL TEMELLERİ VE TÜRKİYE'DE 1960 DARBESİ ÖRNEĞİ

Öz

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki sivil-asker ilişkilerinin tarihsel ve yapısal olarak çok katmanlı doğasını, 27 Mayıs 1960 Askerî Darbesi örneği üzerinden kuramsal bir analizle ele almaktadır. Literatürde öne çıkan beş temel kuram -Huntington'ın Kurumsal Ayrım Kuramı, Janowitz'in Profesyonel Asker Kuramı, Schiff'in Uyum Kuramı, Feaver'ın Vekâlet Teorisi ve Bland'ın Paylaşılan Sorumluluk Kuramı- öncelikle teorik olarak incelenmiş, ardından bu kuramların Türkiye bağlamındaki açıklayıcılık kapasitesi değerlendirilmiştir. Her bir kuram, sivil-asker ilişkilerini siyasal otoritenin meşruiyeti, askerî sadakat, kurumsal denetim mekanizmaları ve kültürel/toplumsal uyum eksenlerinde farklı kavramsal bir anlayışla analiz etmektedir. Ancak Türkiye gibi askerî bürokrasinin sadece teknik değil aynı zamanda ideolojik bir rol üstlendiği modernleşmesini geç tamamlamış ve sekülerleşmeyi yukarıdan aşağıya gerçekleştirmiş bir ülkede, bu kuramların açıklayıcılığı sınırlı kalmaktadır. Zira bu kuramların büyük kısmı Batı tipi oturmuş demokratik rejimlerin koşullarına dayanmaktadır. Makale, 1960 Askerî Darbesi öncesinde Demokrat Parti iktidarının uygulamaları, ordu içinde gelişen huzursuzluklar ve toplumsal kutuplaşma üzerinden yukarıda anılan kuramların Türkiye bağlamında ne ölçüde işlevsel olduğunu ampirik örneklerle tartışmaktadır. Feaver'ın "shirking" ve "monitoring" kavramları İnönü'ye yapılan darbe teklifinden DP'nin ordu üzerindeki denetim mekanizmalarına kadar birçok gelişmeyi açıklamada kullanılmış; Schiff'in kuramsal uyum vurgusu ordu, sivil elitler ve halk arasındaki meşruiyet uzlaşısının nasıl bozulduğunu göstermede yararlı olmuştur. Janowitz'in sivil-toplumsal entegrasyon vurgusu DP'nin halkla bütünleşen dini politikalarının ordu tarafından "tehdit" olarak algılanmasının ardındaki sosyolojik dinamikleri açıklamaktadır. Çalışma, bu kuramsal yaklaşımların Türkiye örneğinde neden yetersiz kaldığını göstererek, sivil-asker ilişkilerini anlamada sadece kurumsal denetim ya





Theoretical Foundations of Civil-Military Relations and The Case of The 1960 Coup in Turkey

da yasal çerçeveye değil aynı zamanda tarihsel kimlikler, ideolojik çatışmalar ve toplumun askerî aktörleri nasıl algıladığı gibi kültürel kodlara da odaklanması gerektiğini ileri sürmektedir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de sürdürülebilir demokratik sivil-asker ilişkilerinin kurulmasının yalnızca anayasal düzenlemelere değil kurumsal güven inşası, karşılıklı sorumluluk bilinci ve askerî reformların toplum nezdinde meşrulaştırılması gibi çok boyutlu bir yaklaşıma dayandığını savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sivil-Asker İlişkileri, 1960 Askerî Darbesi, Kurumsal Denetim, Profesyonellik ve Sadakat, Uyum ve Siyasal Meşruiyet.

Introduction

In modern democracies, civil-military relations are decisive in ensuring political stability and institutionalizing democratic regimes. Although the military is defined as an actor limited to technical functions such as security and defense, it can intervene directly or indirectly in political decision-making processes, especially in societies where the democratisation process is incomplete or shaped by an authoritarian legacy. This situation causes the military to become not only an institution of the state but also an effective carrier of politics and ideology; thus, it turns civil-military relations into a multi-layered area that needs to be discussed not only on structural but also on ideological, cultural and institutional levels.

For any regime to survive, more than “political legitimacy” and “administrative efficiency” is required; the use of “coercive” power by the army and law enforcement is a necessary element of every political regime (Heywood 2015: 477). The state’s control over the armed forces plays an important role in establishing authority at home and abroad. In addition, the multifaceted structure of the state, which includes geographical, economic, political and cultural dimensions, distinguishes it from other social structures. The army, as a fundamental institution, is indispensable for the establishment and continuity of the state’s existence. In democratic systems, the commitment of institutions such as the army to democratic principles is extremely important, since any deviation from these values poses a serious threat to the democratic structure (Tanilli 2003: 205).

In some countries, such as Turkey, where political and social institutionalization is inadequate, the relationship between political authorities and the military is of vital importance, and the military-civilian relationship causes constant tension. This conflict inevitably leads to significant negative consequences in every area of the country. With the changing nature of this tension, it becomes necessary to deeply analyze the basic concepts underlying this complex relationship.

We see that military coups cannot solve the country’s problems, and that although there may be a temporary period of calm after a coup, the accumulated problems grow and cause even greater social unrest (Ertürk 2023: 3-4).





The dynamics and interaction between civilian authorities and military structures in a country refer to the concept of civil-military relations. The strength of these relations plays a vital role in determining the stability and prosperity of a nation. Ensuring civilian control over the military is of great importance for the democratization of these relations.

Indeed, Samuel P. Huntington's theory of institutional separation, which has an important place in the regulation of civil-military relations in the West and especially in the United States of America (USA), focuses on the separation of civilian and military spheres. Huntington's theory also emphasizes the importance of civilian control and military professionalism. According to this theory, it is vital for soldiers not to get involved in politics in order to maintain their professionalism (Huntington 1957; Huntington 1973).

On the other hand, there is evidence that even some professional armies can become involved in politics, including military coups. According to Morris Janowitz, the concept of professionalization has different meanings depending on the technological and political climate and may not ensure that the military is under civilian control or that the military is completely separated from politics. Therefore, Janowitz points out that the successful establishment of civilian control requires the transfer of civilian values to the military. Janowitz's rapprochement theory on civil-military relations generally approaches the subject from a sociological perspective and overlaps with Huntington's perspective on the subordination of soldiers to civilian authority (Özçelik and Savaş Biçer 2018: 64-65).

Janowitz emphasises that the differences between civilian and military values should be narrowed in such a way that they are on the side of absolute civilian political will. In order for military values to reach the norms and ideals of the society, he particularly emphasises the necessity of compulsory military service for the professionalisation of the military. The standard of military training helps to integrate different values (Çilliler 2016:502-503).

There is a significant focus today on the study and discussion of the connection between military service, military ethics, and political ideologies. Although military service emphasizes concepts such as absolute obedience and discipline, the ethical principles and standards that govern the behavior of military personnel are often influenced by particular political ideologies.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the theoretical approaches that stand out in the literature on civil-military relations (such as Huntington's objective control theory, Janowitz's professional soldiering, Schiff's concordance theory, Feaver (1996) 's agency model and Bland's shared responsibility theory) with an analytical perspective and to evaluate the explanatory capacity of these theories in the context of Turkey, specifically through the 1960 Military Coup. In this context, the article comparatively analyzes the approaches of normative and positive theories to civil-military relations and questions how they overlap with the historical-political context in Turkey.





Theoretical Foundations of Civil-Military Relations and The Case of The 1960 Coup in Turkey

The main problem of the article can be formulated as “Which theoretical framework can best explain civil-military relations in countries like Turkey that democratized late and have a strong military tradition?” Within this framework, the study aims to provide an explanatory perspective on the causes and theoretical background of the 1960 coup by conducting a relational analysis of factors such as the legitimacy of civilian authority, military loyalty, mutual trust, control mechanisms and cultural harmony.

The frequent occurrence of military coups in various parts of the world reveals the complex ties between the armed forces and political structures. In this study, civil-military relations are examined by examining the coup of May 27, 1960, which was one of the mentioned coups and was an important turning point in the political life of Turkey.

In this context, the causality of the study is based on the idea that military intervention should be evaluated not only with institutional weaknesses or decisions of individual actors, but also with the structural, cultural and normative frameworks that regulate civil-military relations. Thus, the article draws attention to the necessity of placing civil-military relations on the right theoretical ground in terms of institutionalizing democracy in Turkey and presents a multidimensional analysis of the theoretical dimension of this relationship.

Methodology

This article is a theoretical study and attempts to explain the possibility of another coup in Turkey from the lenses of civil-military relations theories. The aim is to apply four different theories of civil-military relations (Samuel P. Huntington, Morris Janowitz, Peter Feaver, Rebecca L. Schiff and Douglas Bland) to civil-military relations in Turkey before and after the 27 May 1960 cuop attempt and to determine whether a coup will occur in Turkey according to these theories. First, all theories are explained in terms of their strengths and weaknesses regarding Turkey and used to make sense of the dynamics of civil-military relations in Turkey.

Primary and secondary sources were used in this study. Primary sources are original documents directly related to the research and were produced at the time of the incident. Regarding the May 27 coup attempt, both official reports and speeches and statements made by government and opposition officials of the period were included. In addition, the books and articles of the theorists are taken as the main reference point. Secondary sources such as books, articles, newspaper reports, documentaries, and analysis reports on the coup attempt are also used.

Civil-Military Relations

Civil-military relations (CMR) represent a comprehensive set of interconnected relationships that span a wide spectrum. CMR encompasses the interactions between the public and military institutions in daily life, as well as “the issues of the legislature over the





armed forces, budgeting, designing the operation of the armed forces by enacting laws and regulations, and approving the use of the armed forces as part of politics.” It also includes the perspectives of both military and civilian leaders on national security issues (Alabarda 2016: 7).

Following the Cold War, many countries have sought to regulate civil-military relations and reconsider national defense in a way that will adapt to changes in the global system. The “North Atlantic Treaty Organization” (NATO) has also addressed this issue, and as a result, significant changes known as “defense reform” have been made in the military and political framework of the alliance. These changes necessitate structural revisions and civil-military coordination to establish democratic civil-military relations. This should be carried out under democratic principles. The fundamental issue regarding civil-military relations is to ensure that the military remains loyal to the authority of civilian administrators and, at the same time, optimizes the use of existing resources while preparing for its duties. These problems continue in all countries and can even attract the attention of advanced democracies such as the UK and the US. There is a rich scientific literature on this subject, especially in the US, and these countries publish official reports on military strategy, doctrine and defense planning (Kabasakal 2016: 127-128).

Civilian Control of the Military

Today, discussions on civil-military relations primarily revolve around civilian control of the military. The phrase “civilian control,” also known as “political control,” emphasizes the importance of autonomous civilian organizations as key decision-makers in security and defense matters. The basis of this doctrine is the belief that the authority to regulate violence should be in the hands of legitimate civilian authorities and that the military should be governed by democratic principles (Rukavishnikov and Pugh 2016: 136).

In developed democracies, control of the military is not a major concern. There is a general agreement and clear boundaries on military decision-making, allowing for minimal discussion on issues such as arms acquisition and the welfare of armed forces personnel. However, this is not the case in newly established democracies, where maintaining authority over the military becomes a major challenge. These countries face the risk of military dominance, which can lead to coups and the removal of civilian leaders. Therefore, reducing the propensity of the military to engage in such actions becomes a major concern (Beetham and Boyle 1998:91).

Indeed, Soysal argues that it becomes difficult to define the role of the army in the system in countries where the armed forces are believed to have a separate position in society and where experience has shown that the role of the army deviates significantly from traditional democracies (Soysal 1982:101).





Theoretical Foundations of Civil-Military Relations and The Case of The 1960 Coup in Turkey

Robert Dahl emphasizes that one of the most fundamental conditions for democracy to be strong and permanent is that the military and law enforcement forces must be under the control of an elected civilian authority. According to Dahl, the most serious internal risk threatening the development and continuity of democratic institutions is the police and the army, the coercive forces of the state, acting independently of civilian control or rebelling against political authority. The departure of these institutions from the democratic process can eliminate the legitimacy of the government and pave the way for authoritarian regimes or chaotic environments, resulting in coups. Dahl draws attention to this issue as follows:

“Unless the military and police forces are under the full control of democratically elected officials, democratic political institutions are unlikely to develop or endure. In contrast to the external threat of foreign intervention, perhaps the most dangerous internal threat to democracy comes from leaders who have access to the major means of physical coercion: the military and the police. If democratically elected officials are to achieve and maintain effective control over military and police forces, members of the police and military, especially among the officers, must defer to them. And their deference to the control of elected leaders must become too deeply ingrained to cast off (Dahl 2000:148-149).”

For democratic systems to be stable, these institutions, especially the command levels, must be sincerely committed to democratic values and accept the supremacy of civilian authority. Dahl argues that it is imperative that a culture of democracy and a concept of civilian governance permeate critical institutions such as the military and police. Otherwise, democratic processes and the will of elected officials are under constant threat. This is particularly important in countries that have transitioned to democracy or are in the process of strengthening their democratic institutions, as such internal threats can lead to the collapse or weakening of democratic regimes. Although external intervention poses a risk, the greatest danger lies with the leaders who have authority over these institutions. Soldiers are obliged to comply with the directives of elected authorities. Ultimately, the importance of civilian control is vital for the development of democracy (Karadağ 2015: 285).

As such, Dahl clearly demonstrates that the sustainability of democratic institutions depends on the effective control that civilian authorities establish over the army and police. According to Dahl, Costa Rica's dissolution of its army in 1950 constitutes a radical and effective example that permanently protects democratic institutions against internal threats. Dahl states that the existence of the army as a strong and independent institution can pose a serious threat to the continuity of democratic regimes, especially in societies where democratic institutions are not yet sufficiently strengthened. As can be seen in the example of Costa Rica, the complete abolition of the army eliminated the threat of a military coup and provided a strong guarantee for the continuity of democratic institutions (Dahl 2000: 149). Thus, Costa Rica managed to create a more stable political structure compared to other countries in the





region in terms of the continuity of democratic rule. The main reason Dahl uses this example is to draw attention to the necessity of democratic regimes to take bold and radical steps in order to ensure democratic continuity, especially in countries struggling with military coups. In this context, Dahl's perspective emphasizes the importance of not only the existence of structural institutions for the sustainability of democracy, but also democratic consciousness, determined political will and radical reforms when the necessary conditions are met.

Theories on Civil-Military Relations

There are four different perspectives to examine civil-military relations, each with its own characteristics. These perspectives consist of the "classical liberal approach", the "rational action approach", the "international structural approach" and the "cultural approach". Important names such as "Samuel P. Huntington, Morris Janowitz, Carl von Clausewitz and Samuel E. Finer" are associated with the "civilian control" approach, also known as the "liberal approach". Over time, "Douglas Bland and Peter Feaver" added a new perspective to this approach. A notable feature of the classical liberal approach is its "conflictual and dualistic nature that positions civilians and soldiers as opposites" (Karadağ 2015: 285).

Five main theories are examined here when discussing civil-military relations. These include Huntington's "institutional distinction theory," Janowitz's "Professional soldier theory," Schiff's "concordance theory," Feaver's "Principal-Agency Theory," and Bland's "shared responsibility theory."

Institutional Distinction Theory (Samuel P. Huntington)

The typical approach of Western liberal policies to civil-military relations is based on a clear distinction between the civil and military spheres. The roots of this distinction can be traced back to the practices of European nations in the 18th and 19th centuries and Clausewitz's war theories. In his work "The Soldier and the State", Huntington supports the "institutional distinction theory", which has a significant impact on civil-military relations in the Western world and especially in the United States (Özçelik 2018: 62).

According to this theory, two main effects of professionalization in civil-military relations are clear. Initially, civilians should recognize the autonomy of the military in military matters, and the military should respect the political authority of civilians in non-military matters. Huntington therefore emphasizes the importance of maintaining professionalism and warns against the military's involvement in political matters (Serra 2011: 69).

According to Huntington, to achieve a high level of competence in this particular area, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of all variables and stakeholders involved in the decision-making process, as well as to maintain the credibility required to actively participate in that process. Political issues are outside the realm of military expertise, as engaging in such issues blurs the boundaries of professional competence, fosters division





Theoretical Foundations of Civil-Military Relations and The Case of The 1960 Coup in Turkey

within the military profession, and replaces professional principles with external values. It is therefore essential that officers maintain a neutral stance towards politics, and 'military leaders must always ensure that political considerations do not influence their decisions on military matters' (Huntington 1957: 100).

In this context, the power of the army is supported by "objective civilian control," but this approach also serves to reduce the political power of the army. An army operating under the guidance of legal authority is ready to obey orders; therefore, civilian authorities should refrain from intervening in the army's independent areas. Any effort by civil society to involve the army in political affairs will weaken the army's effectiveness and pose a potential security risk. Ultimately, such actions will create opportunities for the army to intervene in political affairs (İnce 2016: 308).

Huntington, on the other hand, argues that the focus should be on maximizing civilian power in order to reduce the "political power of the military." However, this task is complicated by the existence of various civilian groups, each with their own characteristics and conflicting interests. These factors hinder their ability to achieve maximum power against the military. Huntington introduces the concept of subjective civilian control as a way of directing power dynamics among civilian groups and establishing dominance. However, he worries that this concept will lose its importance and become a catchphrase like "states' rights." This stems from the possibility that groups that do not have influence over the military will use civilian control as a precaution against those who do. Huntington also draws attention to the importance of determining which NGOs will exercise control. He emphasizes that subjective civilian control remains the only viable form of civilian control in the absence of a professional officer corps (Huntington 1957: 112-113).

As a result; according to Huntington, the dominant liberal perspective in the USA has failed to adequately recognize and appreciate the importance and role of the army. At the same time, it has developed a hostile attitude towards the army, leading to the neglect of soldiers and the perception that military structures are obstacles to peace and freedom. This situation has caused conservative-minded soldiers to lose touch with the society they are assigned to protect. On the other hand, the effort to establish the army as a respected institution has faced significant difficulties that have led to a delay in the professionalization of officers. Ultimately, Huntington points out that an important way to improve military security is through a transition from "liberalism to conservatism in basic American values." It is also important to develop a conservative atmosphere that encourages professionalism to ensure the successful integration of political power and military expertise in the American command staff (Huntington 1973: 199).

Simply put, Huntington argues that the fundamental problem in American civil-military relations lies in ideology. This shows that the American mindset insists on seeking





liberal solutions not only in civil matters but also in military matters. This approach should be seen as the most important internal threat to American military security. Therefore, Huntington envisions a society in which conservatism is compatible with militarism and takes precedence in military matters (Meşe 2017: 103; Sarkesyan 1996: 3-4). The desire for military security and control of the armed forces centred on the officers, paving the way for a potential conflict. This tense and uneasy environment, coupled with professionalism, military autonomy, voluntary subordination and political neutrality, has led to the choice of solving problems through objective civilian control. In this study, Huntington addressed the possible conflicts between the military and the state. Here, the state is recognised as the government (Kümmel 2002: 64-65).

Huntington is the key to the normative approach with his objective civilian approach. Huntington makes three basic claims. The first of these is that there are significant differences in the roles of military and civilians. The second is that military professionalisation is the key to objective civilian control. The third is that military autonomy is the key to professionalisation (Feaver 2003: 7). Looking at these three main points, it can be seen that autonomy leads to professionalisation, this professionalisation leads to political neutrality and voluntary commitment, and this voluntary commitment and neutrality lead to civilian control (Feaver 2003:18). Huntington (1995) states that the main features of objective civilian control are professionalisation, which should be at a high level, and the recognition and acceptance by military authorities of competencies specific to the occupational group. As a result, both the politician will intervene minimally in the military sphere and the military in the political sphere. Feaver (2003), based on Huntington's discourse, draws attention to the fact that a change-or-death mentality is dominant. This change and transformation can be defined as the conscription of the military by ethical rules.

Professional Soldier Theory (Morris Janowitz)

According to Janowitz, the subordination of military forces to civilian authority in democratic political systems stems not only from the rule of law and tradition; but also from the meaningful integration of military professionals with their adopted standards and civilian values. In this context, establishing civilian control over the military cannot be achieved based on old assumptions, such as simply encouraging the modernization of the military or preventing coup attempts. Janowitz expresses this situation as follows: "Civilian control of military affairs remains intact and fundamentally acceptable to the military; any imbalance in military contributions to politico-military affairs—domestic or international—is therefore often the result of default by civilian political leadership (Janowitz 1964: viii)." Furthermore, according to Janowitz, the subordination of military forces to civilian authority in democratic political systems stems not only from the rule of law and tradition but also from the meaningful integration of military professionals with their adopted standards and civilian





Theoretical Foundations of Civil-Military Relations and The Case of The 1960 Coup in Turkey

values. The democratic model assumes that military leaders are strongly motivated by professional ethics, and this is quite difficult. However, historically, some officers of aristocratic origin made important contributions to the development of the democratic model (Janowitz 1971:83).

Therefore, civilian control requires the effective performance of various administrative and political tasks. For effective civilian control, the legislative and executive bodies must have the criteria and information to evaluate the readiness and effectiveness of the military. The establishment of the performance standards that the military must achieve cannot be developed independently of military professional judgment; it requires the joint interaction of civilian and military leaders. Janowitz, emphasizing the importance of the integration of the military with social values, defines civilian control as a process that emerges and is confirmed by the field of social control, not just administrative: "In the United States the task of civilian leadership includes not only the political direction of the military, but the prevention of the growth of frustration in the profession, of felt injustice, and inflexibility under the weight of its responsibilities (Janowitz 1964: ix)."

In this respect, military personnel must be viewed as professionals who perform their duties with professional self-respect and a sense of moral values. Democratic societies allow professional soldiers to maintain their code of honor and encourage them to develop their professional skills. Soldiers adapt more easily to civilian political control when they see that civilians appreciate and understand their duties and responsibilities. According to Janowitz, as military institutions become increasingly dependent on complex technology, the importance of military managers increases, thus weakening the long-standing traditionalism of the military establishment and reducing resistance to technological innovation: "As the military establishment becomes progressively dependent on more complex technology, the importance of the military manager increases. He does not displace the heroic leader, but he undermines the long-standing traditionalism of the military establishment, and weakens its opposition to technological innovation. With the growth of the military manager, technological innovation becomes routinized (Janowitz 1964: 22)."

This helps to reduce the differences in competence and values between military and civilian elites, thus strengthening democratic control. However, Janowitz emphasizes the importance of managing these differences correctly rather than eliminating the differences between civil society and the military; otherwise, there is a risk of new forms of tension and unexpected militarism.

Janowitz emphasizes the importance of instilling a certain level of political awareness in heterogeneous militaries and argues that granting autonomy to the military alone does not guarantee its reliability. He argues that effective civilian control is essential to prevent the politicization of the military. Janowitz also argues that achieving civilian control requires the





military to accept “the principle of the superiority of civilians over soldiers.” According to Janowitz, after World War II, the military transformed from an aggressive force into an institution dedicated to maintaining global peace, which led to a reassessment of its role and authority. In response to this change, some innovative approaches were implemented to reduce the differences between the military and civilian elites. Indeed, significant progress has been made in closing the gap between these two groups through various initiatives. These efforts included a range of tactics, such as a shift from an autocratic stance to the development of open lines of communication and persuasion techniques, the implementation of advanced organizational practices and negotiation methods, and the revamping of military training practices. The implementation of these groundbreaking strategies has produced impressive results in reducing the inequalities between these different groups (Karadağ 2015: 286).

Janowitz does not find it sufficient to have a special talent in order to talk about a professional occupational group (Colette and Crosbie 2022). Of course, he emphasises the acquisition and development of talent and emphasises importance of this. Professionalism makes soldiers similar to other professional groups by referring to their training and specialisation. However, despite all these common characteristics, the soldier needs additional qualities such as group identity and internal management system. In other words, to some extent, the self-governance approach is also related to the development of professional standards and codes of ethics. The soldier's specialisation in his/her field of interest and knowledge, together with the training he/she receives, makes him/her a professional. In this way, the soldier becomes a professional in his/her field. If soldiers perform less in order to improve their skills, they are defined as low professionals. Here, it is important for soldiers to be able to improve themselves. Because such soldiers do not appear to be professionals when compared to their subordinates and superiors (Barış 2022: 29-30).

According to Janowitz (1964), not recognising the existence of the military, which constitutes an important part of society, or a military institution that is pushed out of society can lead to very dangerous situations. If there are different segments of society and there is a certain level and rhythm of development, the military should follow the same rhythm and keep up with the changes in politics. It is only through civilian control that resources and the incentive to fight for a substantive stance can be encouraged. Janowitz emphasises the fallacy of the military being completely detached from society, even though it has a separate education system, separate uniforms and separate rituals (Schiff 2009: 31). Janowitz addresses the relationship between the military and civilian politics with a sociological approach.

In the debate surrounding the relationship between the military and society, Serra contrasts the opposing perspectives put forward by Huntington and Janowitz. While Huntington argues that the military's effectiveness depends on its uniqueness, Janowitz argues that the adoption of civilian values and practices in modern times has increased the





Theoretical Foundations of Civil-Military Relations and The Case of The 1960 Coup in Turkey

military's effectiveness. In this context, Serra emphasizes that the global community's acceptance of the need for legal justifications for the use of force and the end of the Cold War have given credence to Janowitz's perspective and confirmed its validity in the 21st century (Serra 2011: 10-11).

Janowitz's "professional theory" takes a sociological approach to examining civil-military relations, much like Huntington's perspective on the subordination of the military to civilian authorities. However, Janowitz does not explore issues of control and decision-making. Instead, the theory expands the definition of military power and objectives to include the concept of internal security. Janowitz ultimately believes that the most important factor in maintaining control of the armed forces is optimizing the integration of soldiers into society (Born 2017: 156).

In summary; Janowitz conceives of civilian control as a process that emerges from and is validated by the field of social control. The main theme regarding civilian control is related to the integration of the military with the "social structure and values" (Maigre 2009: 3). Janowitz's approach suggests that democratic sustainability is possible not only with strong civilian institutions but also with the effective integration of the values of the military and civil society. This integration process is critical in increasing the resilience of democratic regimes to internal threats and in preserving democratic stability.

Concordance Theory (Rebecca L. Schiff), Principal-Agency Theory (Peter Feaver), and Shared Responsibility Theory (Douglas Bland)

The "concordance theory" developed by Rebecca L. Schiff (1996) criticizes the traditional civilian control model of civil-military relations, arguing that the fundamental element in preventing military interventions is not only the dominance of civilian authority but also the institutional and cultural harmony established between the military, civilian elites and citizens. Schiff states that to achieve this harmony, three main actors - military institutions, political elites and citizens - must reach an agreement on issues such as constitutional order, recruitment methods and the impact of public policies on the military system. Schiff's theory is a criticism of traditional theories that present a universal and singular model of civil-military relations. It particularly rejects Huntington's discriminatory approach based on professionalization. It argues that the complete isolation of military institutions from civilian actors does not always bring democratic stability. According to Schiff, stability in democratic regimes is based on the continuous dialogue to be developed between all segments of society, historically shaped institutional arrangements and the construction of common values. In this sense, not only civilian control but also mutual trust and value-based integration are emphasized. "Concordance theory does not presume that civilian institutions must control the military, since partnership and dialogue among the major sectors of society is more relevant to this theoretical approach (Schiff 2009: 12-13)."





Schiff's "concordance theory" (1996) promotes the idea of harmony between the military, civilian elites, and citizens by emphasizing the importance of dialogue between institutions and sectors without the need for civilian control of the military. The theory includes citizens in civil-military relations and takes into account cultural differences to understand the nuances of civil-military relations in different countries. This theory attempts to understand civil-military relations through all societal values and offers a critical perspective on universal theories. It goes beyond the traditional distinctions between the armed forces and civilians, encouraging harmony between all actors while acknowledging the boundaries between them (Akyürek, Serap, Atalay and Bıçaksız 2014: 71-72).

Accommodation theory offers an alternative approach to explaining civil-military relations, especially in non-Western societies and countries in transition (e.g. Latin America, the Middle East). While the structural weaknesses of civilian institutions and the historical role of the military in these countries make it difficult for traditional models of civilian control to work, Schiff's theory takes these peculiarities into account. "The power of concordance theory is that it can causally show, without superimposing foreign values and standards, which institutional and cultural attributes are important to prevent domestic military intervention (Schiff 2009: 14)."

The theory of concordance suggests that to prevent internal military intervention in civil-military relations, an agreement must be reached between the military, political authority and society in certain areas. This agreement is shaped by indicators such as the social structure of the officer corps, political decision-making processes, recruitment methods and the institutional style of the military (Schiff 2009: 13). According to the theory, when these indicators are concordant, the possibility of internal military intervention decreases; however, this assumption does not sufficiently explain why this concordance occurs in some countries and not in others (Schiff 2009:13).

The "agency theory" developed by Peter D. Feaver analyzes civil-military relations based on the "principal-agent" relationship. According to this model, civilians are "principals" and soldiers are "agents" who are obliged to carry out their orders. The essence of the model is the question of whether military actors faithfully comply with the instructions given by civilian authorities (working vs shirking) "The civil-military challenge is to reconcile a military strong enough to do anything the civilians ask with a military subordinate enough to do only what civilians authorize (Feaver 2003: 2)." In the field of political and economic power dynamics, Feaver presents "principal agency theory" as a new perspective that sheds light on how dominant actors use power over their subordinates. The main focus of this theory is the examination of civil-military relations in the United States during the Cold War and the post-Cold War period. It particularly investigates the complex connection between "principals" and "proxies." Unlike other approaches that blur the distinction between civilians and soldiers,





Theoretical Foundations of Civil-Military Relations and The Case of The 1960 Coup in Turkey

agency theory places significant emphasis on this differentiation. In this context, civil-military relations also include a mutual understanding between civilian authorities and proxy soldiers aimed at protecting civilian interests through the use of force (Akyürek, Serap, Atalay and Bıçaksız 2014: 73-74). The need for civilian control also depends on determining compliance with the principles of this agreement (Karadağ 2015: 287).

According to Feaver, the basic problem of civilians is to maintain the army as an effective security force and to keep it under democratic control. This creates a continuous strategic interaction process between the two sides. While civilians try to understand whether the soldiers are “working” or not, the soldiers make decisions to “obey” or “violate” by taking into account the power of the control mechanisms and the possibility of punishment. “Civil-military relations is a game of strategic interaction. The ‘players’ are civilian leaders and military agents. Each makes ‘moves’... (Feaver 2003: 58).” Does this stand? Feaver explains as follows; in the literature on civil-military relations, these relations are often conceptualized as a strategic interaction game. In this framework, civilian authorities and military actors are seen as parties that act independently of each other but in mutual interaction. While both sides aim to reach results that are in their interests, they develop strategies by taking into account the possible moves of the other side. The functioning of the game is shaped not only by the intentions of the parties but also by external factors such as the level of external threats the state faces and the uncertainties that the parties have about each other. In this context, the uncertainty that civilians feel about whether military actors will act by their wishes or whether military parties will be subject to possible inspections and sanctions by civilians is considered to be one of the basic dynamics of this strategic game (Feaver 2003: 58). “the military decision whether to work or shirk is shaped by [...] their expectation of the likelihood and severity of any punishment that might come their way should they shirk (Feaver 2003:57).”

Feaver theorizes this situation with the concepts of “shirking” and “monitoring.” When the military sees the oversight of civilian authorities as weak, it may take the risk of implementing its own political preferences. This situation may undermine the legitimacy of civilian authorities. Feaver’s approach interprets civil-military relations as a strategic interaction within the framework of game theory. The loyalty of the military and the monitoring capacity of the civilian are the main determinants of this game. In short, the dynamics of civil-military relations can be described as a “strategic interaction game” in essence. In this game, where the actions of one side cannot be accurately predicted by the other side, there are both civilians and soldiers. In this game, civilians experience uncertainty about whether the soldiers will obey orders. Soldiers also doubt whether civilians will blame them for any act of disobedience (Akyürek, Serap, Atalay and Bıçaksız 2014: 75).

Feaver (1998) analyzes the functioning of this model, especially during and after the Cold War, through the example of the United States. In this respect, the model is extremely





functional in understanding the functioning of the control of military power in democracies with strong institutional structures. However, the capacity of this model to be applied in regimes with weak institutions is low.

Schiff's theory of harmony and Feaver's theory of agency offer different methodological and normative approaches in explaining civil-military relations. While Schiff proposes a model that is sensitive to historical and cultural contexts and based on harmony between actors and social legitimacy, Feaver is based on interest-based control and accountability relations based on rational choice theory. Schiff's model is normatively comprehensive and provides contextual flexibility. It may be more explanatory in preventing military interventions, especially in non-Western societies, during the democratization process. Feaver's model is strong in analyzing power and balance relations within institutional structures; however, its application may be limited to regimes with a certain level of institutional control capacity.

In this context, while Schiff's theory evaluates civil-military relations as a form of "living together," Feaver's approach defines this relationship as a mechanism of "keeping under control" and "attributing responsibility." While both theories accept the necessity of limiting military power for democratic stability, they are based on very different assumptions about the mechanisms that will ensure this.

One of the most important elements identified by Douglas Bland that generally ensures civilian control is the power-sharing system between military and civilian authorities (İnce 2016: 310). Bland's "shared responsibility theory" examines in depth two basic principles that need to be considered: "the military cannot act legitimately on its own, and the control of the military is a dynamic process affected by changes in thoughts, values, personalities and other conditions" (Serra 2011: 268). This means that although the civilian authority has sole legitimacy, civilian institutions accept the need to meet military demands to maintain control. As a result, a relationship of mutual sharing and cooperation emerges (Demir 2019: 51).

Military-Political Relations and the 1960 Coup

The elections on May 14, 1950 were held with great calm and courtesy. Participation was over eighty percent. The officially announced results revealed that the DP won 408 seats, the CHP 69 seats, and the Nation Party (MP) won a single seat (Eroğul 2014:71). The number of independent deputies was 9. However, when the CHP lost the election, there is a rumor that the high-level administrators of the army informed İsmet İnönü that they would help him if he did not want to leave power to the new administrators (Heper 2015: 209-210). Bağlum describes this conversation as follows:

"President İsmet İnönü and his cabinet colleagues were watching the elections from the Presidential Palace. The situation had become more or less clear after 22:00. Chief of General Staff General Abdurrahman Nafiz Gürman arrived at





Theoretical Foundations of Civil-Military Relations and The Case of The 1960 Coup in Turkey

the Presidential Palace around 23:00. Those in the hall could not make sense of the Chief of General Staff coming to the Palace around midnight without an appointment. However, when the head of the Armed Forces spilled the beans, the situation became clear. When General Abdurrahman Nafiz said to İnönü, "Pasha, if you order, we will cancel the elections," İnönü frowned and responded to the Chief of General Staff's suggestion by saying, "Gentlemen, this ends here. Good night to all of you." (Bağlum 1991: 30-31).

Başgil argues that the visible interpretation of this development indicates that the army is ready to organize a coup against the democratically elected government. However, İnönü did not accept the army's offer because he was worried about the public's reaction. Instead, he entrusted the administration to the representatives of the national will (Başgil 2017: 151).

Prime Minister Adnan Menderes received a tip from a colonel on June 5, 1950, stating that a coup would be carried out on the night of June 8-9. Menderes immediately informed Bayar and implemented a series of measures against the army. On June 6, the Turkish army witnessed major changes; the transfers and retirements of high-ranking generals and colonels occurred suddenly and almost like a coup. In this context; the Chief of the General Staff and the Deputy Chief of the General Staff were changed, while the First, Second and Third Army Commanders were appointed to the Military Council. Some generals were also retired. The Naval Forces Commander and the Air Forces Commander were also brought to the center, while it was anticipated that 15 generals and 150 colonels would gradually retire within 2-3 months (Eroğul 2014:88). In his speech at the DP Parliamentary Group Meeting on June 13, 1950, Menderes expressed his criticisms of CHP leader İnönü as follows:

"- My esteemed friends!

I would like to inform you with regret that, although it has not been a month since we came to power, the Republican People's Party has taken the path of provoking the army against us by making some necessary changes an issue. All our efforts are aimed at strengthening democracy in our country. If the Republican People's Party wants to start a successful effort, it should throw out the power addicts at its head. These power addicts want to stir up trouble. They have started a polemic, an attack and an assault by showing the political power in the country as different (corrupt)..." (Aydemir 1969: 212).

Aydemir was dissatisfied, thinking that this speech was a wrong step. The accusation was made hastily, without proper investigation. The reasons for the Colonel's report and its inconsistency with İnönü's character were not taken into consideration by Menderes and his friends. The government took advantage of the opportunity presented by the situation and made decisions that affected senior military officials (Aydemir 1969: 213-215). Eroğul argues that this incident allowed Menderes to consolidate his authority over the army (Eroğul 2014: 88). In the meantime, some DP administrators made derogatory and threatening statements about İnönü:





“After the 1950 elections, when the DP came to power, they targeted İsmet İnönü. In a statement made to the press by the Democrat Party’s İzmir Mayor Rauf Onursal, statements like “Let’s hang İsmet Pasha. Then let’s skin him, fill him with straw and display him to the public” followed one another. Naturally, such statements made the DP lose points. İsmet İnönü, showing his statesmanship and greatness, did not even respond to such petty criticisms.” (Bağlum 1991: 55-56).

After the DP came to power, it intensified its efforts to bring religion to the forefront of daily life (Kara 1985:156). These efforts included the re-translation of the call to prayer into Arabic, the introduction of religious lessons in schools, the reading of the Quran on the radio, the expansion of Imam-Hatip schools, the construction of mosques, and Quran courses. Prime Minister Menderes justified these practices by stating that the Turkish state was Muslim and would remain Muslim, and that the requirements of Islam would be fulfilled. These efforts to legitimize Islam and traditional rural values were an important part of the DP period (Sarıbay 1985: 59-60).

As restrictions on religion and religious expression were eased, the social role of religious orders was strengthened. The perception of Islam ceased to be the reason for the decline of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey's political, economic, military and intellectual lag behind the West, but became a source of social harmony and an important component of Turkish identity (Grigoriadis 2014: 102).

Kaçmazoğlu emphasizes that the increase in religious revival in the period from 1950 to 1960 can be attributed primarily to the spread of newspapers and magazines that embraced religious ideologies. This led to various other religious developments. The parties’ tendency to adapt to religion can be attributed to their political motives and their aim to establish control over the masses rather than their desire to reject secularism or encourage religious practices (Kaçmazoğlu 2012: 67). Eroğul, who shares a similar view, states that the DP leaders and President Celal Bayar were not advocates of a theocratic regime. However, they were ready to tolerate reactionary behavior as long as it did not pose a threat to the stability of the state and was in line with their political interests (Eroğul 2014: 122).

On the other hand, the DP coming to power gave hope to the soldiers that important steps would be taken in the army in the near future, but no developments occurred in this direction. This situation was quickly reflected in the reactions towards the government (Demirel 2016: 234-235). However, Turkey’s entry into NATO in 1952 deeply affected the relations between civilian and military authorities. This gave the army the opportunity to abandon its previous modernization attempts and instead begin comprehensive reforms (Balcı 2015: 16). However, Turkey’s NATO membership and military ties with the US gradually caused Turkish officers to realize the weak state of the army. The most important factors causing this situation were the lack of resources and the DP’s unpreparedness for military





reform. At the same time, partisan views towards the bureaucracy prevented the soldiers from improving their conditions (Demirel 2016: 235).

In fact, Çelikoğlu draws attention to the material and status difficulties experienced by soldiers. He states that officers and bureaucrats in Ankara have difficulty finding suitable apartments that they can afford. He also expresses his discomfort with the fact that some party officials enter the military office without complying with protocol and can assign the person in question to another place if their demands are not met, and that officers and civil servants who want to meet with the minister wait in line behind provincial and district party members. Moreover, he emphasizes that the rapid development in the country has contributed to the emergence of new centers of power in the democratic structure and wealthy individuals in the social structure. As a result, these developments have had a detrimental effect on the morale and motivation of the officers (Çelikoğlu 2017: 71).

The DP government showed a tendency to over-rely on a select group by appointing people it trusted to command positions. This tactic led to significant results. Commanders, usually close to the government, assured that everything was fine. This optimistic dialogue was not always based on reality (Demirel 2016: 244).

In the first period of the DP (1950-1954), in addition to liberal economic initiatives, oppressive policies were also pursued towards the opposition. For example, the government seized the People's Houses belonging to the CHP, which received significant amounts of aid from the treasury, thinking that these funds were going to the CHP. This was achieved with the "Law on the Return of the Unjust Acquisitions of the CHP" enacted on December 14, 1953 (Gülener 2012: 230-231).

The DP was also disturbed by the rise of the MP. This party posed a potential threat to the DP's political stance, and the DP argued that the MP was manipulating the people's religious sentiments to gain support (Başgil 2017: 95). The party was closed by a judicial decision on January 27, 1954 (Çemrek and Uluer 2018: 415). However, it soon re-emerged in the political arena as the "Republican Nation Party" (CMP) (Okutan 2014: 168).

The press also had its share of the DP's oppressive policies. Because the DP administration was intolerant of criticism, the press was constantly faced with oppressive policies. The first blow to the press came in 1951 with a decree that made its work more difficult. The amendment to the Penal Code in July 1953 made it more difficult for the press to criticize the government. The most severe blow was the new regulations that introduced new crimes and severe sanctions in the press and radio before the 1954 elections (Eroğul 2014: 127-128).

After the 1954 elections, the DP leaders gained self-confidence and were no longer afraid of the army, which led them to keep the military bureaucracy under tight control. The





attempt to subordinate the military authority led to an active anti-DP movement among the officers (Şaylan 1978: 403).

The most important issue that the DP focused on during this period was the economy. Trying to solve these problems, the DP resorted to “the policy of harshness that it had followed in the previous period” due to the increase in social opposition (Gülener 2012: 231). Indeed, Kırşehir, which did not vote for the DP, was made a “district” and the Abana district of Kastamonu was made a “sub-district”. The immunity of MP General Chairman Osman Bölükbaşı was lifted, paving the way for his arrest. In addition, “the claim that there could be nothing more natural than the judiciary being subject to the will of the people was used to facilitate the retirement of judges and other high-ranking civil servants” (Eroğul 2014: 187).

The press, universities, unions and the opposition, as well as the judiciary, were subjected to the DP’s oppressive policies. On June 27, 1956, a law was passed prohibiting open-air meetings of political parties outside of election periods. Even closed meetings required the approval of the highest civil administrator in the region. On July 2, 1957, Osman Bölükbaşı was arrested for insulting the Parliament. On September 11, 1957, a new election law was passed that included some restrictive provisions (Eroğul 2014: 180-189).

In 1957, the DP’s dominance over the economy was eliminated. Menderes was optimistic about the effectiveness of his policies and was sure that this was a temporary obstacle (Ahmad 2014: 120). However, the situation would develop in the opposite direction and the country would face an economic bottleneck.

Following this development, many officers supported the group. The first indication of this discontent was seen in the famous “nine officers” incident. In 1958, a secret military structure was revealed. As a result of the military trial that was held later, the participants in the formation were arrested but were acquitted due to lack of evidence. However, Samet Kuşçu was found guilty of making false statements and slandering his colleagues and sentenced to prison (Başgil 2017: 113).

The 1957 elections led to increased political conflict and the rise of the opposition. Menderes’ focus was on consolidating his authority and he aimed to achieve this by establishing a national front called the “Vatan Cephesi” (Homeland Front) (Karpas 2010: 256; Yıldız 2001: 231; Heper 2015: 119). This front aimed to isolate those who opposed Menderes and neutralize the opposition. However, instead of achieving unity, the DP’s Vatan Cephesi initiative polarized political life even further. In April 1960, the DP established a commission to investigate the “subversive activities” of the opposition, claiming that they were planning a military coup. Student protests that began in Ankara soon spread to other parts of the country and martial law was declared. The DP announced that early elections would be held in September 1960. However, the 27 May coup led to the collapse of the DP government (Ahmad 2014: 120-121).





Theoretical Foundations of Civil-Military Relations and The Case of The 1960 Coup in Turkey

On May 27, 1960, with the intervention of a group of soldiers within the army, the political regime established by the 1924 Constitution ended, and instead, a period of government led by soldiers called the National Unity Committee (MBK) began (Doğru 1998: 12). The coup was carried out outside the military hierarchy⁶⁰⁸ and the reason for this was announced on the radio on the morning of May 27 as follows:

“Dear Citizens;

Today, due to the crisis our democracy has fallen into and the recent saddening events, and in order to prevent fratricide, the Turkish Armed Forces have taken over the administration of the country. Our Armed Forces have embarked on this operation to save the parties from the irreconcilable situation they have fallen into, to hold fair and free elections as soon as possible under the supervision and arbitration of an impartial administration above the parties, and to hand over the administration to the winners of the elections, regardless of their affiliation (...)” (Ahmad 2014: 127).

There are different perspectives on the reasons behind the coup. From one perspective, the intervention on May 27 was a reaction to the DP’s authoritarian rule and some of its unacceptable practices. An alternative view is that the coup was a product of class conflict. Another perspective is that the coup was instigated by external dynamics, not internal ones. Finally, some perspectives frame the coup as a move in line with Kemalist principles.

The 1960 coup was not only a constitutional break in Turkish politics, but also the beginning of a long-term system of tutelage in civil-military relations. Cemal Madanoğlu, in his memoirs, recounts the ideological and personal divisions among the officers who prepared the coup, emphasizing that the military’s intervention in politics undermined unity even within the army (Madanoğlu 2021: 53-55).

Lieutenant General Cemal Madanoğlu, one of the leading figures of the May 27, 1960 coup, was not only the commander at the head of the military movement, but also one of the figures who assumed political responsibility for the process. In his book titled *Korgeneral Cemal Madanoğlu'nun Anıları* (Memoirs of Lieutenant General Cemal Madanoğlu), the unrest within the army leading up to the coup, the young officers’ distrust of civilians, and the political authority’s exclusionary attitude toward the army are clearly conveyed. Madanoğlu argues that the coup was “inevitable,” claiming that the prime minister at the time, Adnan Menderes, had become authoritarian, silenced the press, and tried to suppress the opposition. However, what is striking in the same memoir is the deep differences of opinion within the National Unity Committee that was formed after the coup. Madanoğlu states that Alparslan Türkeş and his friends in particular acted with a more radical, authoritarian, and nationalist approach to governance, while he himself was in favor of a democratic transition (Madanoğlu 2021: 112-113). This conflict resulted in the purge of the fourteens, shaking the image of unity within the army. The memoir also reveals that the relationship established with the civilian





administration after the coup quickly turned into a crisis of confidence and that it was not easy for the military to withdraw from politics. Madanoğlu's account clearly shows that even among the coup plotters there was no consensus on a "return to civilian rule" and that this situation reinforced the tradition of military tutelage in Turkey.

Ahmet Er's memoir is an important source for understanding the inner world of an officer who participated in the coup d'état of May 27, 1960, and the mentality within the army at the time. In the early chapters of the book, he conveys the understanding that developed among young officers in the 1950s that "the army should intervene." According to Er, this understanding was shaped not only by dissatisfaction with the current political situation but also by Turkey's place in the Western bloc and interpretations of Kemalism (Er 2000: 38-41). Seyhan Dünder's work *The Man in the Shadows* reveals the conflicts of interest and power struggles behind the scenes of the coup, exposing the fragility of the image of military unity. After the coup, there was a serious distrust of civilians in the National Unity Committee that was established. Committee members attempted to manage the bureaucracy with military discipline, which delayed the transition to civilian rule and laid the foundation for a new concept of guardianship. It is clearly stated that personal ambitions and ideological divisions played a role in the purge of the group known as the "Fourteen" Dünder's observations reveal that the image of unity within the army was largely an illusion and that the power vacuum that emerged after the military coup led to serious crises even among the military elite. (Dünder 1966: 22,63-66,74). İbrahim Metin's work *The Revolutionaries Settle Accounts* recounts how the group of officers known as the "Ondörtler" (Fourteen) were purged after the coup, demonstrating that even within the army, differences of opinion were suppressed through coercion. A significant portion of the coup plotters considered civilian politics to be inadequate, corrupt, and dangerous to "national interests"; over time, this thinking gave rise to a lasting distrust of civilian authority and a belief in military tutelage. The fact that this cadre sought political positions in civilian life after the purge of the Fourteen reveals how much this contradicted the army's claim of "apoliticality" (Metin 2012: 87,115).

The accounts in Hulusi Turgut's book *Türkeş'in Anıları* (Türkeş's Memoirs) reveal that Alparslan Türkeş's desire was not only to correct the regime but also to make the army the primary administrator of the state. Türkeş's Memoirs reveal the complexity of civil-military relations in Turkey after May 27 and the importance of military leaders' different approaches in shaping these relations (Turgut 1995: 72,90). Ahmet Yıldız also notes in his memoirs that factionalism within the army increased during the coup process, weakening military discipline and ties with civilian institutions. The book emphasizes that this factionalism within the army undermined military discipline and unity, negatively affecting the long-term effects of the





Theoretical Foundations of Civil-Military Relations and The Case of The 1960 Coup in Turkey

coup. According to Yıldız, this situation also led to trust issues during the transition to civilian rule and caused tensions between the military and civilians. The book also details the conflicts in the decision-making processes of the National Unity Committee and how differing opinions were suppressed through coercion (Yıldız 2001: 60-63). All these memoirs show that May 27 was a turning point in military-civilian relations and that the interventionist military mentality deeply affected the institutionalization process of Turkish democracy.

Prior to the coup d'état of May 27, 1960, there was a secret organization among the officers; however, the number of participants in this organization was quite limited compared to the total number of officers, which was around 7,000. It is known that approximately 100-150 officers played an active role in this coup attempt. This coup-plotting minority emerged not as a representation of the entire military but as a select group with specific ideological and political orientations. In this context, the reasons behind the coup plotters' secret organization and their ideological differences after the coup should be analyzed directly from firsthand memoirs. For example, there are clear differences between Cemal Madanoğlu's defense of a "populist and democratic transition" and Alparslan Türkeş's "nationalist-conservative and tutelary" approach (Madanoğlu 2021; Turgut 1995). This division is one of the fundamental dynamics of the tension in civil-military relations after May 27.

General Evaluation: The 1960 Coup Process in the Light of Civil-Military Theories

The first major rupture following the 1950 elections was when İsmet İnönü received a verbal offer stating that the army was ready to intervene if he did not want to leave power despite the election results. This offer directly showed how willing the military was to be involved in the political process. However, İnönü's rejection of the coup by saying "this ends here" created a brief moment in which the military's intention to intervene in civilian authority was prevented. These developments can be read within the framework of Feaver's "agency theory". According to Feaver, civil-military relations are a "strategic interaction game" and whether or not the military remains loyal to civilian authority is related to whether they are "working" or "shirking". At this point, the Chief of General Staff's coup proposal is a direct example of "shirking". However, İnönü's democratic reflex prevented this deviation, and a short-term normative balance was established.

This incident is also closely related to Rebecca Schiff's "concordance theory". Schiff had mentioned that a historical and institutional consensus was necessary between civil authority, the army and the people as a way to prevent military interventions in civil-military relations. However, this consensus quickly deteriorated after 1950. Menderes's sudden purges in the early years to bring the army under his control damaged institutional harmony and created political distrust within the army. This is a direct example of the "lack of consensus" in Schiff's theory.





When viewed from the perspective of Samuel Huntington's "institutional distinction theory," the fundamental problem in this process is the blurring of the civil-military distinction. Huntington states that the military must stay away from politics to preserve military professionalism. However, both the coup proposal made to İnönü and Menderes' early purges of the military in the form of punishment politicized the military sphere. According to Huntington, such mutual interventions represent an unsuccessful form of "subjective civilian control" and violate the boundaries between the military and politics.

Morris Janowitz's "professional soldier" approach reads this period more through the lack of "social integration." Janowitz argues that the military institution should integrate with civilian values not only technically but also socially. In this context, the DP's tendency towards authoritarianism, which is incompatible with civilian values, and on the one hand, pushing the army out of the system, weakened the soldiers' sense of belonging to the democratic order. According to Janowitz, such exclusionary policies strengthen the army's urge to intervene again in ways outside the system.

Finally, this period is also a failure in terms of Douglas Bland's "shared responsibility theory." According to Bland, in civil-military relations, not only the dominance of civilians but also the recognition of the legitimate demands of the military and the principle of mutual responsibility are essential. However, the DP government's direct interventions without establishing any dialogue channels with the military disrupted this "dynamic control process" and created an environment of mutual distrust.

The period between 1953 and 1957: When we look at the period that can be described as a period of secular tension, NATO compliance and institutional distrust, it can be seen that from 1953 onwards, the Democrat Party (DP) began to establish a tense relationship with many constitutional norms, especially the principle of secularism, to make its power more permanent. The army felt directly responsible for the "founding principles" of the regime. This situation indicates an important rupture in terms of Rebecca Schiff's (2009) theory of harmony. According to Schiff, in a democratic regime, there should be a historical harmony between civilian elites, the military structure and society in areas such as the constitutional order, personnel structure and public policies. When this harmony is lost, the army can see politics as a "corrective" actor. The DP's practices that excluded the army rapidly eroded this harmony. Particularly, the partisan approach to the recruitment process and the deployment of generals to positions outside of command created insecurity and fragility within the military bureaucracy.

This process can also be explained by Janowitz's (1964) theory of professional soldiers. Janowitz emphasizes that the military structure must integrate with social values. However, during the DP government, the army was positioned as the ideological representation of the regime rather than the people. For this reason, the DP, which turned to the religious values of





Theoretical Foundations of Civil-Military Relations and The Case of The 1960 Coup in Turkey

the people, was perceived as a “deviation” by the army. According to Janowitz, the army should also follow the rhythm of development of different segments in society; otherwise, the army would remain outside of political developments.

This period is also very important in terms of Feaver’s (2003) agency theory. It is observed that the DP had difficulty controlling the opposition within the army; on the other hand, the military sector showed “shirking” tendencies in some areas. Feaver states that civil-military relations were a strategic interaction game between the parties, and that soldiers made the decision to implement or violate the orders of civilians in this game according to the possibility of being punished. Developments such as the removal of Kırşehir’s provincial status in 1954, the detention of dissidents, and the suppression of universities and the press created a perception of “security crisis” among military cadres, and this crisis formed the basis of organized movements in the following years.

In addition, according to Huntington’s (1957) institutional separation approach, it is essential to maintain clear civil-military boundaries. However, the DP’s intervention in both civilians’ military space and the army’s reflex to regulate civilian space created a structure that disrupted this separation. According to Huntington, an army acting under the guidance of legal authority is ready to obey orders; therefore, civilian authorities should not interfere in the army’s independent areas. The DP’s direct orders to the army, making surprise changes in the command level, and its inability to intervene in the cliques organized within the army itself, indicate that it has moved away from the “objective civilian control” model suggested by Huntington.

Finally, the failure of the DP to meet military demands from the budget during this period, the lack of modernization, and the inequality in civil service conditions can also be evaluated in terms of Bland’s (2001, cited in Serra, 2011) theory of shared responsibility. According to Bland, effective civilian control is possible not only by giving orders, but also by meeting the needs of the military institution and keeping it within the system. However, this sharing was not done during the DP period, and the military structure was isolated materially and psychologically.

The period of 1958–1960: When we look at the process leading to political polarization, economic crisis and the coup, it is seen that in the period after 1958, the DP increased its repressive practices to maintain political control in parallel with the increasing opposition and economic crisis. These practices include authoritarian tendencies such as silencing the press (Deniş 2021), pressure on universities, interference in the judiciary, and criminalization of unions and the opposition. During the same period, discomfort within the army also increased, and especially among young officers, a search for solutions outside the system began. These developments show that a structural rupture was experienced in terms of civil-military relations.





When evaluated in terms of Schiff's (2009) theory of harmony, this period represents a process in which the consensus between civilian elites, the military and the people has completely disappeared. According to Schiff, when there is no harmony between these three actors regarding the constitutional order, public policies and military personnel structure, the military can position itself as an intervention tool outside the system. The DP's initiatives to exclude a certain segment of society, such as the "Homeland Front", have strengthened the assumption that the army represents the entire people.

When viewed from Janowitz's (1964) perspective, it is seen that the integration that should have existed between the army and society was broken during this period. The military elites no longer saw the government elected by popular vote as legitimate; instead, they took on the role of "protector" of the regime. This situation contradicts Janowitz's concept of professionalism because the army took on an ideological mission rather than integrating with democratic values.

From the perspective of Feaver's (2003) agency theory, this process shows a period in which civilians were unable to monitor the army's behavior, and the army resorted to "shirking" behavior. The DP's failure to allocate resources to the army in an economic crisis, the worsening conditions of the military's civil service, and practices such as partisanship in the distribution of aid from NATO weakened the army's commitment to civilians. According to Feaver, in this case, the army may take the risk of acting according to its political preferences when monitoring weakens.

These developments contradict Huntington's (1957) concept of objective civilian control. Huntington emphasized that civilians should focus on politics and soldiers on military professionalism. However, the DP wanted to control the military sphere, while the army took on the task of "correcting" politics. This two-way intervention eliminated the ideal distinction Huntington proposed. The army began to act as a political actor, not a professional institution.

When viewed from the perspective of Bland's (2001, cited in Serra 2011) shared responsibility approach, the 1958–1960 period can be characterized as a period in which "mutual legitimacy" in civil-military relations ended. Bland emphasizes that civilians can only control the army if they approach the demands of the army with sensitivity. The DP government, on the other hand, refrained from meeting the army's status and logistical demands. This situation paved the way for the military to abandon intra-system channels and seek "direct intervention."

Countries where democracy is not fully established are subject to military occupation. As can be seen from all the coup attempts in Turkey, the military has a say in shaping political life and tries to show its reaction through coups when the government does not go as it wishes. Those who carry out coups attempt to legitimize them by issuing a "government declaration" stating that civilian administrators have abused their duty to protect the country's interests





and have served their own interests, emphasizing that the coup was carried out on behalf of the people and for the benefit of the people (Tan, 2008: 61).

Conclusion

The trajectory of civil-military relations in Turkey reveals a deeply rooted and structurally complex pattern that extends from the Ottoman era into the Republican period. Particularly through the Janissary Corps, the military played a decisive role in the political sphere of the Ottoman Empire, often blurring the boundaries between defense and governance. As the empire weakened, the military became increasingly politicized and fragmented, leading to rebellions and ultimately contributing to the collapse of the state.

In the Republican era, especially under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the military was restructured in line with the principles of modernization, secularism, and national sovereignty. For a time, this structure functioned as a professional institution detached from politics. However, with the transition to a multi-party political system in the 1950s, historical tensions in civil-military relations resurfaced.

The theoretical frameworks employed in this study—Huntington’s institutional distinction theory, Janowitz’s professional soldier theory, Schiff’s concordance theory, Feaver’s principal-agent theory, and Bland’s shared responsibility model—enable a multidimensional understanding of Turkey’s civil-military dynamics. Huntington’s emphasis on professionalism and objective civilian control demonstrates how violations of the boundary between civil and military spheres erode institutional trust. Janowitz’s integration-based approach shows that distancing the military from evolving societal values weakens democratic consolidation. Schiff’s emphasis on institutional and cultural concordance helps explain how the lack of sustained consensus among military elites, political leadership, and society undermines democratic stability. Feaver’s strategic interaction model illustrates how both civilian and military actors behave under conditions of uncertainty and mutual distrust. Bland’s model highlights the consequences of insufficient mutual institutional responsiveness, particularly during the Democrat Party period.

Yet, all of these theoretical approaches remain somewhat limited in explaining the Turkish case. These theories are mostly designed around the experience of established Western democracies. In a country like Turkey—where modernization came late, secularization was state-driven, and the military was positioned as the carrier of the founding mythology—military interventions cannot be prevented solely through institutional control mechanisms. The frameworks of theorists such as Huntington and Feaver, based on institutional rationality, fall short in accounting for the military’s ideological codes and sense of mission. Schiff’s cultural and historical concordance theory partially addresses this gap, but





struggles to fully capture the complex factors at play in Turkey, such as polarization, religion-state relations, and elite conflicts.

Therefore, the 1960 coup should not be viewed merely as a result of individual discontent or institutional conflict, but as the outcome of a deeper clash between divergent understandings of the regime's sources of legitimacy. There was neither full military autonomy nor solid civilian oversight. This vacuum allowed the military to position itself as a force both outside and above the system.

In a broader context, Turkey's experience reflects a fundamental problem seen in many transitional democracies: the military's dual identity as both guardian of the state and potential political actor. While liberal democracies uphold the ideal of civilian supremacy, this ideal often struggles to take root in conservative institutional cultures resistant to reform. Moreover, when military reforms are not internalized at the societal level or supported institutionally, it becomes increasingly difficult to escape the cycle of intervention and democratic regression.

In conclusion, sustainable civil-military relations cannot be achieved through legal frameworks and political will alone. They require the construction of institutional trust, the sharing of democratic values, and the establishment of a lasting consensus among core societal actors. Otherwise, the military will continue to exist as both a stabilizing force and a potential threat to democracy. In order to prevent military coups from happening again in Turkey, the military must first and foremost stay out of politics and be fully accountable to civilian rule. The training of military personnel should focus on democracy and the rule of law. Strengthening civil society and the media is important for raising democratic awareness among the public. Political parties should develop policies that reduce polarization and embrace everyone. The rule of law must be upheld, and the judiciary must be independent and impartial. The military should only be concerned with defending the country against external threats and should not interfere in domestic politics. Additionally, civilian oversight mechanisms should be strengthened in line with international standards. These steps will strengthen democracy in Turkey and prevent coups.

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